

John Grist

SIXTEEN

SERMONS,

7

PREPARED

FOR THE PRESS

FROM

THE MANUSCRIPT

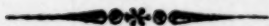
OF A

CLERGYMAN,

NOW DECEASED,

OF

THE COUNTY OF SALOP.



LONDON,

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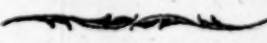
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1797.



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|--------------|--------------|---|
| 8. | 6. | A small <i>a</i> for the great one in the word <i>And</i> . |
| 12. | 12. | A small <i>g</i> for the large one in the word <i>Grace</i> . |
| 27. | 22. | Inverted commas at the beginning of the line. |
| 39. | 6. | Ditto. |
| 43. | 7. | Ditto. |
| 85. | 24. | For <i>formed</i> read <i>found</i> . |
| — | — | Dele the word <i>be</i> . |
| 89. | 21. | A large <i>M</i> for the small one in the word <i>mosaical</i> . |
| 92. | 2. | Dele the comma after the word <i>Christ</i> . |
| 94. | 1. | After the word <i>festivals</i> insert the words <i>and fasts</i> . |
| 111. | 7. | A large <i>W</i> for the small one in the word <i>what</i> . |
| 115. | 10. | Before the word <i>flesh</i> insert the word <i>the</i> . |
| 123. | 9. | A large <i>D</i> for the small one in the word <i>depart</i> . |
| 157. | 7. | Inverted commas at the beginning of the line. |
| 165. | 3. | For <i>transcending</i> read <i>transcendent</i> . |

SERMON I.

THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS
TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF
ETERNAL HAPPINESS.

GAL. vi. 7.

BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR
WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL
HE ALSO REAP.

THESE words contain this
general and fundamental doctrine of re-
ligion; that every man shall finally receive
of God, according to what he hath done:
“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall
“he also reap.”

WHAT our Saviour alleged upon ano-
ther occasion, to express the reasonable-

B

ness

ness of judging, concerning the hearts of men, by their actions, may no less properly be applied here, as a rule, whereby every man may judge, from his own behaviour and actions, what recompense he will meet hereafter: "Men do not
 "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of
 "thistles." As the fruit is always of the same kind with the stem that bears it; and the grain reaped, is naturally of the same sort with the seed that was sown; so man's final state of happiness or misery shall be the proper effect of his present actions: "He that soweth to his flesh," (as the apostle expresses it, in the words following the text) "shall of the flesh
 "reap corruption: but he that soweth
 "to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap
 "life everlasting."—There is scarce any vice, the practice of which is not attended with some degree of misery, even in this life; which is a proper warning what will be the consequence of it in the next.

THE

13 THE doctrine, that every man shall finally receive of God according to what he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil; may be undeniably proved from reason, and is expressly confirmed by revelation. Yet, so manifold and various are the delusions of sin; and such a mist do the passions and appetites of men continually cast before their eyes; that the apostle thought it necessary to add, with great affection and earnestness, the caution in the text; and to repeat it elsewhere, frequently, upon the like occasion. “Be not deceived;” thus in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, “Let
 “no man deceive himself: if any man
 “defile the temple of God, which temple
 “ye are;” that is, if any man lives a
 vicious and debauched life; “him shall
 “God destroy.”—And again; “Know
 “ye not, that the unrighteous shall not
 “inherit the kingdom of God? Be not
 “deceived; neither fornicators, nor ido-
 “laters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,

“ nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
 “ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunk-
 “ ards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,
 “ shall inherit the kingdom of God:” the
 words are remarkably plain. In like man-
 ner, in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians;
 “ Ye know that no whoremonger, nor
 “ unclean person hath any inheritance in
 “ the kingdom of Christ, and of God.
 “ Let no man deceive you with vain
 “ words: for because of these things
 “ cometh the wrath of God upon the
 “ children of disobedience.”—Again, in
 his Epistle to the Hebrews; “ Take heed,
 “ brethren, lest any of you be hardened
 “ through the deceitfulness of sin.”—And
 St. John says; “ Little children, let no
 “ man deceive you; he that doth righ-
 “ teousness is righteous.”

THESE repeated cautions and admoni-
 tions of the Apostles, were intended to
 warn us, that there are many deceitful
 considerations, which, without due care,
 would

would hide from the eyes of men the clear light of this plain truth, that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—What the principal of these delusions are, I shall, in some measure, endeavour to explain.

THAT which first and most obviously offers itself to our consideration, is the deceit men impose upon themselves by a general carelessness and inattention to their happiness hereafter. They labour continually to gratify their appetites and passions; and consider not that the Most High regardeth; and that, for these things, God will bring them to judgment.—They see that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; and go on from generation to generation in one settled course, wherein it fares very much alike with the righteous and the wicked, with him that sacrifices, and him that sacrifices not: this draws them on carelessly in the ways of sin.—Because

they see no immediate harm attendant on a sinful course, they conclude that none ever will be the consequence: not considering that there is a time for all things; and that one day is with God as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.—To this deceit, which men put upon themselves, is to be attributed that state of the world which our Saviour describes: “As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of man be.”

BESIDES this general carelessness, numberless are the other deceits, with which men frequently delude themselves.

SOME judge of God by themselves; not according to the reason of things, but by their own temper and disposition.—

And

And because they are not apt to be displeased, unless with attacks directly injurious to themselves, vainly think, that God, who cannot be injured by the sins of men, will not be severe in punishing their transgressions.—Not considering that he is not a party, but the judge and governor of the universe; who punishes wickedness, not that he himself suffers by it; but, as being contrary to the eternal laws of his righteous government; and to the welfare and happiness of the whole creation.

OTHERS there are, who seem to content themselves with a loose and general expectation, that they shall fare upon the whole as well as the rest of mankind: and that the multitude of those who live in the same sensual way with themselves, cannot be all in a state liable to God's displeasure. They hope, therefore, that the irregularities of which they are guilty, will be put to the account of natural infirmities,

firmities, and excused as the weaknesſes of human nature.—Theſe men deceive themſelves by not conſidering that the very end and deſign of Chriſt's religion was, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, “ And purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works:” that we might “ not be conformed to this world, but transformed, by the renewing of our mind, that we might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” They conſider not, that for this very reaſon we are commanded “ not to follow a multitude to do evil;” not to follow the cuſtomary, and perhaps, fashionable vices, of a degenerate and corrupt world: but, on the contrary, to ſtrive to “ enter in at the ſtrait gate,” and to live worthy of God, who hath called us into his kingdom.—They conſider not, when they comfort themſelves in the multitude of tranſgreſſors, that God hath declared, that “ though hand join in hand, the wicked ſhall not be unpuniſhed.”

ANOTHER delusion, by which men sometimes impose upon themselves, is, their observing the great faults, of which some very eminent persons are in scripture recorded to have been guilty.—But they consider not the virtues and excellencies which the same persons have displayed, in the general course of their lives: and above all, their great and exemplary repentance and amendment.—The delusion consists, in making no distinction between accidental miscarriages, to which the best men are liable, but continue not in them; and the habitual sins of those who “go on still in their wickedness.”

THERE are others, who “speak peace” to themselves, in a vicious course of life, upon the mere general notion of the mercy and goodness of God; without considering, in the least, whether they themselves be proper and capable objects of his mercy and compassion. God will have mercy to the full extent of what is reasonable,

sonable, just and fit; but no further: he himself hath told us how far his compassion will extend.

GREAT, therefore, is the error by which all those deceive themselves, who “continue in sin that the grace,” and mercy, “and goodness of God may abound.” The danger of this folly is most emphatically expressed in Deuteronomy: if “there be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when a man heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:” (that is, to add one sin to another, to continue in the practice of any known wickedness or debauchery whatever) “the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him.”

BUT

BUT the most frequent, and of all others the most extensive deceits, by which men impose upon themselves, are the two following.

FIRST, it is a very common delusion, for corrupt minds to be deceived by a careless interpretation of certain texts of scripture; wherein salvation may seem to be promised on other terms, than the practice of virtue and true righteousness.—Thus; when the scripture declares that “the just shall live by faith;” and “that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law:” they imagine; that a confident belief of that, which, perhaps, they do not understand, will bring them to salvation. Whereas, the texts speak of that obedience, grounded on faith, which is the practice of virtue; required by the doctrine, and supported by the belief of the promises of the gospel.—And this is confirmed by St. James; that “faith without works is dead.”

WHEN

WHEN St. Paul tells us that "Christ
 "is made unto us righteousness, and
 "sanctification;" they fancy that the righteousness of Christ himself shall be imputed unto them.—Whereas, the meaning is; that the motives and assistances, contained in the gospel of Christ, are sufficient to reform mankind; and to induce them to become truly virtuous and holy.—When the same apostle assures us, that "by grace we are saved;" they are willing to suppose, that the Grace of God will save them, without their doing any thing to save themselves.—Whereas, the grace there meant; is that "grace of
 "God, which bringeth salvation to all
 "men; by teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should
 "live soberly, righteously, and godly in
 "this present world."—And it is, therefore, styled grace; because the benefit of it is graciously and mercifully extended to such as have been formerly wicked, if they now effectually reform and amend.

UNDER

D UNDER the same head of deceit may
 be ranked all superstitious observances
 whatsoever: every thing whereby vain
 men take upon them to supply the want
 of true virtue and goodness: all charms
 and "forceries," as St. John calls them,
 "by which the nations are deceived:"
 such as processions, pilgrimages, penances,
 extreme unctions and the like.—In a
 word, every thing that one man can do
 for another: every thing that any man can
 do for himself, otherwise than by keeping
 the commandments of God, in the habit
 of a sober, virtuous, and good life.—For,
 with what delusions soever, and in whatso-
 ever various forms men impose upon them-
 selves; still the apostle's assertion will for
 ever remain true, "he only that doth right-
 "teousness is righteous," and, "whatsoever
 "a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

13 THE second of those two great deceits,
 which I said were of all others the most
 frequent and extensive, is an imaginary
 design

design of future repentance.—The great doctrine of the gospel is, that whosoever sincerely and effectually repents, shall obtain remission of his past sins, by virtue of the redemption and intercession of Christ.—To a world, ignorant of the will, and doubtful of the extent of the mercy of God, this doctrine was the glad tidings of peace and salvation: an encouragement to amendment and reformation: a new ground and support for virtue: a grace, or favour of God, which brought salvation by “teaching men, “that denying ungodliness and worldly “lusts, they should” for the future “live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this “present world,” and thereupon be accepted of God.—For christians, to whom the will of God, and the necessity of holiness hath been clearly revealed, to take from hence an occasion of flattering themselves that they may indulge in debauched and unrighteous living, and repent when they think fit, is, in the

the apostle's phrase, "turning the grace
 "of God into lasciviousness," making
 "Christ the minister of sin;" or, according to the text, "deceiving" themselves, by attempting to "mock God."—For, the repentance spoken of in the gospel, is not the passion, but the virtue of repentance: it is a real change of mind, evincing itself in such an amendment of life and manners, as is in scripture very properly called "the new man."—Most justly, therefore, do we condemn those of the church of Rome, when they place imaginary penances and a repeated circle of confessions to the priest, in the room of this real change of mind and manners.—And no less justly shall we "fall
 "into the same condemnation," if we place a repeated circle of confessions, to any being, even to God himself, in the room of real virtue and amendment of life.—For, let us not deceive ourselves; "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man
 "soweth, that shall he also reap."

SERMON

the apostle's phrase, "turning the eyes
of God unto the things which are
seen, and not unto the things which
are not seen." "looking" therefore
by "turning" of "mind" God
the repeated phrase of the apostle
"the things which are seen, and
not unto the things which are
not seen." is a real change of mind
turning itself inward in a constant
the mind inward, as in a constant
wisdom, which is not new wisdom, but
the wisdom which we obtain from
of the church of Rome, when they place
imaginary points in and a repeated circle
of reflection in the midst of the room
of this real change of mind and
not. And no less truly shall we
"into the same condemnation," if we
place a repeated circle of reflection in
any being, even to God himself, in the
view of real things and immaterial
things. For, let us not deceive ourselves;
"God is not mocked; whatsoever a man
soweth, that shall he also reap."

S E R M O N II.

ON THE THANKSGIVING FOR PEACE.

MAY 5, 1763.

PSALM cxlv. 2.

EVERY DAY WILL I BLESS THEE, AND I WILL
PRAISE THY NAME FOR EVER AND EVER.

THE particular occasion upon which this psalm was composed is not known: but, in general, that it was in celebration of some extraordinary blessing; such as success and victory over powerful enemies; or some other like remarkable interposition of providence; is evident from the whole tenor of it.—For, the author, beginning with high expressions of joy and thankfulness, “I will
c “ extol

" extol thee, O God, my king, and
 " will bless thy name for ever and ever.—
 " Every day will I bless thee, and I will
 " praise thy name for ever and ever,"
 proceeds to declare that the ground of this
 joy and thankfulness, was some mighty
 act, some public and eminent interposi-
 tion of providence in his behalf.—" One
 " generation," says he, " shall praise thy
 " works to another, and shall declare thy
 " mighty acts.—I will speak of the glo-
 " rious honour of thy majesty, and of
 " thy wondrous works.—And men shall
 " speak of the might of thy terrible acts,
 " and I will declare thy greatness."—Then,
 he goes on, from the consideration of past
 mercies, to infer the reasonableness of
 men depending on the same providence
 for the continuation of his protection in
 time to come; if, by religious behaviour,
 they prove themselves worthy of his care
 and favour.—" The Lord is nigh unto
 " all them that call upon him, to all
 " that call upon him in truth.—He will
 " fulfil

“ fulfil the desire of them that fear him :
 “ he will hear their cry, and will save
 “ them.—The Lord preserveth all them
 “ that love him : but all the wicked will
 “ he destroy.”—And then he concludes, in
 the last verse, with expressions of joy
 and thanksgiving ; as he began in the
 first.—“ My mouth shall speak the praise
 “ of the Lord : and let all flesh bless his
 “ holy name for ever and ever.”

THE application of this discourse of the
 psalmist to our present occasion is very ob-
 vious.—God has done for us things, no
 less wonderful and remarkable, than he did
 for the Jews of old : and it becomes us
 to praise him after the same pattern
 which the inspired psalmist drew up for
 their use : it becomes us “ every day to
 “ give thanks unto him, and to praise
 “ his name for ever and ever.”—There
 is something remarkable in the expression
 “ every day.”—As if every day of our
 lives were to be a day of thanksgiving ;

and our expressions of gratitude as uninterrupted as our breath.—The meaning is, that, as we are directed by the apostle, to “pray without ceasing;” and by our Lord, to petition our heavenly father for “our daily bread,” in acknowledgment of our perpetual dependence on providence, for the very breath we draw, and the food we daily eat: so, we ought to be no less constantly and habitually thankful to God for the benefits we have received, than we are importunate in our petitions to him for the things we want.—In every thing giving thanks; or, as St. Paul expresses it; “giving thanks always for all things unto God even the father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THERE are some things which we enjoy in common with all the creatures of God; life, breath, and the protection and preservation of providence.—And for these we are to join in that great and universal choir of all creatures in heaven and earth,

earth, which St. John sets forth that he heard saying, "thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."—There are gifts peculiar to man; viz. understanding and knowledge, reason and the use of speech; with other extraordinary faculties; for which we are to express our gratitude, by employing them in the service of our maker; and with our tongues to praise him and magnify him for ever.

THERE are blessings peculiar to certain nations ; and for these we are to glorify God, by a particular thankful acknowledgment, and by the proper use of such respective blessings.

IF the providence of God has planted us in a fruitful country, and his goodness successively crowned our years with perpetual increase; we are to express our gratitude,

gratitude, by temperance and sobriety, by charity and works of mercy to the poor; by taking great care to prevent luxury and debauchery, pride and vanity, sloth and forgetfulness of God: which vices are too frequently the result of plenty and prosperity.—“When thou
 “hast eaten and art full,” said Moses, in his last and wise exhortation to the Israelites, “then thou shalt bless the Lord
 “thy God, for the good land which he
 “hath given thee.—Beware that thou
 “forget not the Lord thy God, in not
 “keeping his commandments, and his
 “judgments, and his statutes, which I
 “command thee this day: lest when thou
 “hast eaten and art full, and hast built
 “goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and
 “thy silver and thy gold, and all that
 “thou hast is multiplied: then thine
 “heart be lifted up, and thou forget
 “the Lord thy God.”

IF God has vouchsafed to direct us by the glorious light of the gospel, and the knowledge of his son our Saviour Jesus Christ; while many other nations are yet overshadowed by the darkness of heathenism, and possess not the knowledge of the laws of God; the best, and most acceptable method of returning our thanks for so inestimable a blessing, is, that we endeavour to propagate the knowledge of Christ with simplicity to others; and are careful, above all things, to obey the truth ourselves, in love and purity.

IF God has preserved unto us our lawful liberties and properties, under a mild and well constituted government; when almost all other nations upon earth are subject to arbitrary and illegal dominion: our gratitude for the continuance of such a blessing, can, in no other way be so properly expressed, as by making it our chief care to use that liberty,

c 4

which

which we so justly boast of, and which we have thought worth defending, almost with infinite blood and treasure, so as not to abuse it to licentiousness: to use our liberty, so as not to run into the contrary extreme of lawlessness and confusion: to use it, so as not to break through the obligations of regular government and legal restraint.

IF God has crowned all other blessings, with that which is the security and preservation of them,—a safe and honorable peace; after a series of successes; and victories, beyond example, numerous, great, and complete: “what shall we render unto the Lord, for” these “his benefits?”—The answer to this question is of great importance; and the serious consideration of it, is that, without which, our religious assemblies would be but mere hypocrisy; and our prayers, no better than mockery of God.

IF

IF we will, therefore, make worthy returns to him, for these his benefits: in giving us a peace, which, not only secures to us our ancient rights; but, adds also, the acquisitions of extended commerce, and enlarged dominions to this realm: we must, in the first place, be careful to impress ourselves with a due sense of the beneficent being, from whose almighty power these blessings are derived.—We must be fully persuaded, that it is God, who subdueth our enemies under us,; and that all our success is to be attributed to the protection of his “mighty hand.”—That it is “he” that “breaketh the bow, and knappeth the “spear in funder, and burneth the chariots in the fire, making wars to cease “in all the world.”

BUT, it is not enough that we are convinced, that it is the hand of God which bringeth about all great events: we must, moreover, so consider and meditate

ditate upon it, in a practical manner, as
 to be truly thankful to him for the advantages we reap thereby.—The Jews, in the time of Moses, knew very well by whose power it was that they were “made to
 “ride on the high places of the earth,
 “and to suck honey out of the rock,
 “and oil out of the flinty rock:”—by whose power it was, that they were “led
 “in the wilderness like sheep: under
 “the shadow of” whose “wing” they were, when “no man was suffered to
 “do them wrong;” and, by whom, “even kings were reprov’d for their
 “fake.”—Yet, even of these very persons, who knew all these things so perfectly, and had seen them with their own eyes, did that holy man complain, that, “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;” that “he forsook the God, who made him,
 “and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.”—How well soever, therefore, we apprehend that God is the disposer of the events of all human affairs; what are we
 the

the better, unless our hearts are filled with gratitude, our mouths with praises, and our lives influenced by acts of obedience, for all the great things which he hath done for us?—This is the only return that frail and dependent creatures are capable of making to the supreme lord and governor of all things: for he derives no advantage from our goodness, nor, “can man be profitable to God.” But thankful and obedient we may be, and most inexcusable and base is our ingratitude, if his mercies do not so affect us.

THAT our gratitude may become truly acceptable, it must be accompanied with such circumstances, and followed with such behaviour, as may shew the words of our mouths to be real expressions of the thoughts of our hearts, and that our praises proceed “not out of feigned lips.”—Our joy must express itself, “not in rioting and drunkenness,” not in licentiousness and debauchery; but in praises and thanksgivings,
accom-

accompanied with sobriety and purity, with modesty and humility; such as become those who wish to honour God with sincere devotion in the practice of that religion, the preservation of which, from being over-run with the tyranny and superstition of popery (which might have been the case, had it pleased God to permit our enemies to have been as successful against us, as we have been victorious over them) and that providence hath thus preserved us, is a principal ground of rejoicing.

It becomes us, as christians, to rejoice not in revenge and bloodshed, not in the misery and destruction even of our enemies themselves.—It becomes us to rejoice not upon the increase of our power for dominion's sake; not so much upon the enlarging our territories and aggrandizing the honour of our arms, as upon being enabled to preserve our just rights and properties, and the freedom of religion.

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LET us, then, express our thanksgiving for peace, by approving ourselves the children of peace.—By laying aside all those unchristian divisions and animosities among ourselves, which are kept up by mutual revilings and accusations; full, as we may reasonably hope, of more uncharitableness than truth: the means of causing all which to be forgotten are, first to unite in heartily pursuing the things wherein we all agree; and then to wait with charity in those wherein we differ; until, even in these also, God shall reveal the truth unto us.—Let us consider, that force and violence, without regard to right and equity, are the means by which our adversaries propagate their power: and, if we exercise these amongst and against ourselves, we shall be doing that for our enemies which they could not accomplish; namely, conquer us.—For, I trust, that if ever this nation be conquered, it will not be by a foreign power; but by raising divisions
and

and contests among ourselves; contrary to the doctrine of our holy religion; which teaches us, as to desire public, so to maintain (as far as possible) private peace, by mutual love, charity, and good-will; as becomes those who profess the gospel of Christ.—Our lusts and follies, our debauchery and profaneness, our unreasonable and unchristian divisions among ourselves are worse and more dangerous than those enemies we have conquered abroad.—Let us but undertake the noble and necessary work to overcome and utterly subdue these also, and we shall enjoy peace indeed.—Which that we all may do, God, of his infinite mercy grant, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Saviour.

SERMON

SERMON III.

ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

(GOOD FRIDAY.)

ISAIAH liii. 5.

HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE
WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHAS-
TISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM, AND
WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED.

THAT the promised Messiah was to suffer, is unquestionable to all Christians; because our Saviour constantly instructed the apostles in this truth; both before his death, that they might expect it; and after, that they might be confirmed by it.—And this fifty-third chapter of *Isaiah* is, beyond all question, a sad, but clear description of a suffering person; and that could be none other

other than the Messiah. For surely no man's soul could be made an offering for our sins, but that of our Saviour.—Nor hath God laid on any man “the iniquity of us all,” but on our redeemer. Upon no person but the Messiah, could “the chastisement of our peace” be. Nor with any stripes could we be healed, but his.—And St. Paul hath taught throughout the world, that “Christ must needs have suffered.”

As we believe Christ to be the son of God, “the express image of his” father,—“light of light; very God of very God;”—and, consequently, as God, incapable of suffering: so also we believe the son of God took upon him the nature of man; i. e. a reasonable soul, together with a true and real body; so as to become “flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone:” and in this nature alone he is capable of suffering.—For this body of Christ, being really and truly

truly human, was subject to the same appetites, properties, and infirmities as frail and mortal bodies; such as being sensible of weariness, hunger, and thirst.—Nor was it liable to inward weaknesses, and natural infirmities only; but also to outward injuries and violence: for no parts of his sacred body were injured, but he was sensible of the pain.—Deep was the sense, and grievous was the pain, when “the ploughers ploughed
“on his back, and made long furrows.” The spear that pierced his side caused no painful anguish, because the body was then dead. But the nails which “pierced” his “hands and” his “feet,” made another kind of impression, while it was yet alive; constraining him, in his anguish, to cry out “my God, my
“God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and, at last, by the violence of torture, to cause separation of soul and body.—Thus did the body of the son of man truly suffer the bitterest pains.

AND, as Christ took upon him both parts of the nature of man; so, he suffered in them both, that he might become a Saviour of the whole.—In that sense which the soul is capable of suffering, in that he suffered. The apprehension of future evil filled his soul with fear: the apprehension of evil present tormented the same, with sadness, sorrow, and anguish; so that, he was truly represented to us by the prophet, as “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” And how he felt this grief, is fully expressed, in his saying unto his disciples, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” We ought not, therefore, to question whether our Saviour suffered or not: but rather endeavour to reach the knowledge, how far, and in what degree he suffered; which, though we can never fully comprehend; yet we may be certain, that the grief and sorrow that he felt, the anguish and sufferings he underwent, were

were incomparably beyond all sorrows of which any person here can be sensible or capable.

THE evangelists have in such language expressed his agony, as cannot but raise in us the highest admiration at the bitterness of his passion.—“He began to be sorrowful,” says St. Matthew: “he began to be sore amazed,” says St. Mark: and “to be very heavy,” say both.—Yet these words, in our translation, fall short of the original; which renders him suddenly possessed with fear, horror, and amazement; encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow; tormented with anxiety and disquietude of mind.

THIS he first expressed to his disciples, saying, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful;” and, lest they should not fully apprehend the excess, added, “even unto death.” As if “the pangs of death,”

as the psalmist says, " had already encompassed him, and the pains of hell " got hold upon him."—He went " but " a little further," before he expressed the same to his Father ; " falling on his " face, and praying, even with strong " crying and tears, unto him that was " able to save him from death."—Nor were his cries the only evidence of his inward sufferings ; for every pore of his body helped to pour forth and express the bitter anguish of his soul ; while " he prayed more earnestly, his sweat " was, as it were, great drops of blood " falling down to the ground :"—as the psalmist had before declared, " I am " poured out like water, and all my " bones are out of joint : my heart is " like wax, it is melted in the midst of my " bowels."—The heart of our Saviour was, as it were, melted with fear and astonishment : and all the parts of his body, at the same time, enflamed with anguish and agony.

As

As his grief was great, so the occasion of it will manifest the height and bitterness thereof; for, "he was wounded "for *our* transgressions, he was bruised "for *our* iniquities," and "God laid on" his own Son "the iniquity of *us all*."— If we consider the perfection of his knowledge; that he understood all the sins of men for which he suffered; all the guilt and heinousness of those sins, and their offence against God: if we consider his ardent love and zeal, for the glory, honour, and majesty of God, which was so greatly violated by those sins: then, if we consider the love he bore to the sons of men; far greater than they had for themselves; as he knew those sins were sufficient to bring them to eternal destruction; and, at the same time, reflect how much his pure and spotless soul loathed and abhorred all the pollutions of sin:—if we consider these circumstances, we cannot wonder at that grief and

forrow which he expressed.—For, if the true contrition of one single sinner cannot be performed without great remorse; what bounds can we set to that anguish which proceeds from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of many millions of sinners?

ADD, to all this, the immediate hand of God pressing upon him this load,—the sins of all mankind.—Thus we may “behold, and see, if” ever “any forrow” was “like unto” that “forrow where—
“with the Lord afflicted” him, “in the
“day of his fierce anger.”

Thus have I endeavoured to shew you what the Mediator between God and man suffered; who, though he was the Son of God, must necessarily be as truly man as we are men; since, when he travelled, he was thirsty and weary, as we are; who, being grieved, wept; being
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ing in agony, "sweat drops of blood;" being scourged, felt pain; and, being crucified, died.

I shall now consider, that it was necessary Christ should die, that "by his stripes we might be healed."

His death was necessary, to confirm every part of his office, as Mediator between God and man. It was necessary, as to the prophetic office, that Christ should die, to the end that the truth of all the doctrine which he delivered might be confirmed by his death.--He was the true and faithful witness, "who, before "Pontius Pilate," bore testimony to "a "good confession."—He preached unto us a new and "better covenant," that was to be ratified by his blood; which is, therefore, called by Christ himself, "the blood of the new Testament," or, everlasting covenant; for that covenant was also a testament; and "where a

"testament is, there must of necessity
 "be the death of the testator."—Besides,
 Christ, as a prophet, taught us, not only
 by word, but by example: and, though
 every action of his life was most wor-
 thy of our imitation; yet, by this one
 example of his death, we are taught
 much variety of christian virtues. What
 example was that of faith in God to
 "lay down his life, that he might take
 "it up again;" and, in the bitterness
 of his torments, to commend his spirit
 into the hands of his Father; and, "for
 "the joy that was set before him, to en-
 "dure the cross, and despise the shame?"
 What a pattern of meekness, patience,
 and humility, for the son of man to
 "come, not to be ministered unto, but,
 "to minister; and to give his life a ran-
 "som for many:—to be led like a sheep
 "to the slaughter; and, like a lamb,
 "dumb before the shearer, to open not
 "his mouth:—to endure the contra-
 diction of sinners against himself; and,
 to

to "humble himself unto death, even to
 "the death of the cross?" What an
 example of charity, to die for us, while
 we were sinners and enemies; when,
 "greater love hath no man than this,
 "to lay down his life for his friends;"
 to pray upon the cross for them that
 barbarously used him, and crucified him,
 "Father, forgive them, for they know
 "not what they do?"—Thus, "did
 "Christ suffer for us, leaving us an
 "example that we should follow his
 "steps;"—that, as "he suffered for us
 "in the flesh," so "should we crucify
 "the lusts of the flesh;—for he that
 "hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased
 "from sin, that he no longer should
 "live the rest of his time in the flesh,
 "to the lusts of men, but to the will of
 "God."—And thus his death was neces-
 sary to confirm his prophetic office.

It was also necessary that Christ
 should die, to perform his priestly
 office.—

office.—“ For, every high-priest, taken
 “ from among men, is ordained for men,
 “ in things pertaining to God, that he
 “ may offer both gifts and sacrifices for
 “ sins.”—But Christ had no other sacrifice to offer for our sins than himself.
 —“ It was not possible that the blood
 “ of bulls and of goats should take away
 “ sins:—wherefore, when he cometh into
 “ the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body
 “ hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, thou hast
 “ had no pleasure: then said he, lo, I
 “ come to do thy will O God;” then did Christ determine to offer himself up for us:—and, because the sacrifices of old were to be slain; and, “ without
 “ shedding of blood,” there “ is no remission;” therefore, if he will offer sacrifice for sin, he must of necessity die, and so “ make his soul an offering
 “ for sin.”—If “ Christ” be “ our passover,” he must be “ sacrificed for us.”

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—We were sold under sin, and he who will redeem us, must give his life for our redemption: for, we could not be redeemed with corruptible things, but only with the precious blood of Christ, as “a lamb without blemish, and without spot.”—We had all sinned, and so offended the justice of God; and, by an act of that justice, the sentence of death passed upon us: therefore, as Christ became our surety, and undertook our debt for us, he must die to satisfy the justice of God, which had inflicted the penalty of death on our transgressions: and so St. Paul saith, “when we were “enemies, we were reconciled unto “God by the death of his son.”—Thus the death of Christ was necessary towards his great act of priesthood, as the “oblation,” propitiation, “and satisfaction “for the sins of the whole world.”—And the same apostle likewise assures us of its efficacy to take away sin;
“for

“ for, if the blood of bulls and of goats
 “ sanctifieth, to the purifying of the
 “ flesh; how much more shall the
 “ blood of Christ, who, through the
 “ eternal spirit offered himself, without
 “ spot, to God, purge our consciences
 “ from dead works.”

NEITHER was the death of Christ necessary only with regard to us; but also, with regard to the qualification of himself, and consummation of his office. For, “ in all things it behoved him to
 “ be made like unto his brethren; that
 “ he might be a merciful and faithful
 “ high-priest,” and having “ suffered,
 “ being tempted, might be able to succour them that are tempted.”—So that having undergone all sufferings, even the pains of death; he, as a priest by experience, is most sensible of our infirmities, most compassionate of our miseries, most willing and ready to support

port us under, and to deliver us out of temptations.

THUS being qualified by his extreme suffering, he was also fitted to perfect his offering.—For as “the high priest “once every year,” for the atonement of the sins of the people, “entered into” the Holy of Holies, “not without “blood;” so “Christ being come an “high-priest of good things to come, “by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, by his “own blood entered at once into the “holy place, having obtained eternal “redemption for us.” And thus his death was necessary to complete his priestly office.

HIS death was also necessary to establish his regal power and dominion over all.—For, by it, having spoiled “principalities and powers,” he made a shew openly of “triumphing over”
them

them in it; and, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is Satan.—“ He humbled himself, “ and became obedient unto death, even “ the death of the cross: wherefore God “ also hath highly exalted him, and “ given him a name which is above “ every name: for to this end Christ “ both died and rose again, that he “ might be Lord of the dead and “ living.”

THUS, by the death of Christ was our redemption wrought; the price was paid, the atonement made, and satisfaction given; that God might be reconciled to us, who before was offended with us: by his blood was the covenant of peace sealed, and full power obtained to make it good unto us.

LET, then, the ignominy, punishment, and servile death which our favour condescended to undergo, that he
might

might redeem us who were slaves and in bondage under sin, for "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant;" let this, I say, teach us the glorious doctrine of humility and patience under the severest afflictions that can happen to us in this world; and encourage us to imitate him who "endured the cross, despising the shame;" and withal deter us from the practice of all sin and wickedness, lest we should "crucify unto ourselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."—For we are to be "planted in the likeness of his death," and that we may be so, we must cause it to appear in our lives and conversation, that "our old man was crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed."—We know that "they which are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" and they which have not are none of his.—We must "not glory,
" save

“ save in the croiſ of our Lord Jeſus
 “ Chriſt:” nor can we properly glory
 in that, except by it “ the world be
 “ crucified unto us, and we unto the
 “ world ; that henceforth we ſhould ſerve
 “ the living God, in righteouſneſs and
 “ holineſs all the days of our lives.”

SERMON

SERMON IV.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE
BODY.—THE CREDIBILITY THERE-
OF; WHY THOUGHT INCREDIBLE;
AND ON THE CERTAINTY, MAN-
NER, AND EFFECTS THEREOF.

Acts xxvi. 8.

WHY SHOULD IT BE THOUGHT A THING IN-
CREDIBLE WITH YOU, THAT GOD SHOULD
RAISE THE DEAD?

THE belief of the resurrection
of the dead is a fundamental article of
the christian religion.—A truth, indeed,
which in great measure (if not wholly)
lay concealed from mankind, before Christ
came from heaven to declare it.—Yet,
since it is clearly delivered in the christian
dispensation, together with other truths
that evince the reasonableness thereof;

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there

there now remains no cause to those who believe in this revelation, " why " it should be thought a thing incredible " with you, that God should raise the " dead."—However, the further to confirm you in this belief, I shall endeavour to shew

1st, The credibility of the resurrection of the body.

2ndly, Why it seems incredible.

3rdly, The certainty of it.—To which I shall add something, concerning the manner and effects of it.

FIRST, Of the credibility of the resurrection of the body.—By the resurrection, I mean restoring the same soul to the same body; and re-uniting them both, after they have undergone separation.—That this is possible, we may conclude from the resurrection of Christ himself; who,

who, after he was truly dead, and had lain three days in the grave, came to life again; and conversed with his disciples, in the same body in which he before had suffered and died.—To which if we add, that “Christ died and rose “again” as our head and representative, we may easily conclude the possibility of the thing; and likewise, that his resurrection was a sure and certain pledge of ours.—For, that he hath power to raise the dead, is evident, by his raising himself: and, if his death and resurrection were in our stead, and as our surety; then, certainly, he that raised himself is able likewise to quicken our mortal bodies. So the apostle strongly argues; “if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus “from the dead, dwell in you; he that “raised up Christ from the dead, shall “also quicken your mortal bodies, by his “spirit that dwelleth in you.” Hence he is styled “the first born from the “dead,” and “the first fruits of them

“ that slept.” By this he hath made death no other than a sleep, and the grave only the dormitory of our bodies ; where, when we die, we lie down to take our rest, a morning awaiting us far more glorious than the sun that now rouses us from our pillows. Christ, being risen as the earnest and first fruits from the grave, assures us that “ the dead in Christ” shall awake and rise after him : “ for, if we “ believe that Jesus died, and rose again, “ even so them also which sleep in Jesus, “ will God bring with him.”——And, therefore, the apostle asks the question, “ if Christ be preached that he rose from “ the dead, how say some among you, “ that there is no resurrection of the “ dead ?”——As if it were absurd to doubt after so full a proof of Christ’s resurrection. Besides, our Saviour’s raising several from the dead in the view of many people ; and the bodies of several that slept arising out of their graves at his crucifixion ; are plain demonstrations of

of the possibility of the thing.—This leads me to enquire

SECONDLY, “Why it should be thought
 “a thing incredible, that God should raise
 “the dead?” Which question plainly sup-
 poses that there were some who thought
 this an incredible matter: and indeed the
 number of these was not, and still is not
 small.—For, when St. Paul preached this
 doctrine at Athens, we read that “cer-
 “tain philosophers encountered him, say-
 “ing, what will this babbler say? other
 “some, he seemeth to be a setter forth
 “of strange Gods, because he preached
 “unto them Jesus and the resurrection.
 “And when they heard of the resurrection
 “of the dead, some mocked: and others
 “said, we will hear thee again of this
 “matter.” The Sadducees, indeed, of old
 positively denied a resurrection. But,
 what is the cause that has rendered this
 doctrine so incredible, after so clear an
 instance in its favour, by the resurrection

of our Saviour? The vain conceits of men, and their presumption in measuring the power of God by their own weakness.—For, some tell us the resurrection of Christ was not so difficult because his body never corrupted, lay in the sepulchre a short time only, and as the parts of it still kept together, it might be more easily supposed to revive; whereas ours at their dissolution crumble to dust, and are afterwards so scattered and confounded with other dust, that it is not to be conceived how they should come together and unite again.—But is this too difficult or impossible to infinite power? The several parts of our bodies, though dispersed and mingled with other dust, are still in existence; and, is it any difficulty to infinite knowledge to discover where they are, or to infinite power to call them together again? It certainly is not more difficult to bring the several parts of created matter together again than it was at first to create them.—To
any

any thing less than omnipotence this is indeed impossible: but an all-seeing eye, and an almighty hand, can easily discover, and readily bring together, the several parts however separated.—And, therefore, our Saviour told the Sadducees that they greatly erred in their arguments in support of their opinions against the resurrection, “not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”——

The very same body shall arise at the last day, however its several parts may be scattered and dispersed; this is evident from the consequence of the resurrection; “for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” That which shall then be received is either reward or punishment: reward for the good, and punishment for the evil done in the body: that which shall receive reward and be liable to punishment is not only

the soul but the body also ; and it is inconsistent with justice, that he who sinned in one body should be punished in another ; or that he who pleased God in his own flesh should see God with other eyes : therefore, the same body which did the good or evil, shall be raised up at the last day, to receive reward or punishment, for the things that were done in it.

BUT this more properly belongs to my third head, in which I shall endeavour to shew the certainty of the resurrection.

Now, this certainty is chiefly founded on divine revelation ; supported, however, by many arguments from reason. This truth is abundantly confirmed by divine authority, both in the old and new Testament.—In the old, Job declares his assurance of a resurrection, in this sublime passage ; “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand
“ at

“ at the latter day upon the earth : and
 “ though after my skin worms destroy this
 “ body, yet in my flesh shall I see God :
 “ whom I shall see for myself, and mine
 “ eyes shall behold, and not another.”—
 In the new Testament, we find our Sa-
 viour declaring himself to be “ the re-
 “ surrection and the life ;” and, that
 “ he that believeth in him, though he
 “ were dead, yet shall he live :” that
 “ the hour is coming, in the which all
 “ that are in the graves shall hear his
 “ voice, and shall come forth, they that
 “ have done good, unto the resurrection
 “ of life ; and they that have done evil,
 “ unto the resurrection of damnation.”

BUT, besides the ample testimony of
 scripture, reason itself may teach us this
 truth.—For, since the rewards of virtue,
 and the punishment of vice, are not dis-
 tributed in this life, where good men
 are frequently afflicted, and “ the un-
 “ godly flourish like a green bay-tree ;”
 it

it follows, that there must be another life, in which these things will be set right, and justice done to both.

HAVING seen the certainty, let us observe the manner, of the resurrection.—This, we are told, will be effected wholly by the power of God, and the influence of his holy spirit; for nothing less than omnipotent divinity is equal to this work, and that is abundantly able to effect it.—The apostle, therefore, would have none “think it incredible, that God “should raise the dead;” for, he that gave existence, can easily restore it; he that breathed life into all things, can easily inspire our scattered dust; and “the spirit that raised up Christ from “the dead,” can “also quicken our mortal bodies.”—Our bodies, being made the temples of the Holy Ghost, become the seat of God, and the residence of a divine spirit; and, therefore, though they be destroyed awhile, will in a little time be raised and rebuilt again.

BUT

BUT what will be the effect and issue of the resurrection?—The apostle tells us that “Christ will change our vile bodies, “that they may be fashioned like unto “his glorious body, according to the “working whereby he is able to subdue “all things unto himself.”—Meaning, that our bodies shall undergo a most blessed change; and, from being frail and imperfect, become like the glorified body of Christ. St. Paul hath given us some particulars concerning this happy change; he says that our bodies, which, by death, are “sown in corruption,” shall be “raised in incorruption; and, “this mortal must put on immortality.” That is, though our bodies here consist of jarring and contrary qualities, which naturally draw on death and desolation; and, after that, contain nothing but the seeds and principles of corruption; yet, they shall be raised to an immortal state, in which all corruptible principles shall be done away, and they shall suffer, grieve,
and

and die no more. Again; the body that is, by death, "sown in dishonour," shall be "raised in glory:" i. e. though it be put in the grave as vile and abject; yet, at the resurrection, it shall come forth a glorious body, and appear in a bright, beautiful, and splendid form: for so we read, "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father." Moreover; the body that "is sown in weakness," shall be "raised in power:" meaning, that although we are here subject to many sicknesses and infirmities, our constitutions being so frail and crazy that the most trifling annoyance is frequently apt materially to affect us; we shall hereafter be raised free from these infirmities, and no injury shall reach us more.—Once more:—what "is sown a natural, shall be raised a spiritual body:" by which we are to understand, not that our bodies shall be divested of all matter and changed into spirits; but, that they shall in a great measure be freed from

from the burdensome clog and dulness of matter:—that is, they shall be above the pleasures of sense, not subject to decay, and acting for ever without weariness.—In a word, the body shall be perfectly released from all pain and passions, and continue in perfect strength and vigour for ever.

Now, the belief of such a resurrection should teach us to live in continual expectation and preparation for it, by avoiding all the pollutions of sin, and preserving purity both in body and mind; for he “that hath this hope” must endeavour to “purify himself, even as God “is pure.” The belief of the resurrection may serve to arm us against sickness and the fear of death; for, though our bodies are here beset “with divers diseases “and sundry kinds of death,” it will not be long ere they are placed out of the reach, and advanced above the assaults
of

of both : “ we know ” (saith the apostle)
 “ that when the earthly house of this
 “ tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have
 “ a building of God, a house not made
 “ with hands, eternal in the heavens.”—
 For this reason, the great apostle, so far
 from fearing the dissolution of his earth-
 ly frame, even longed to be divested of
 this mortal body, that he might put on
 glory and incorruption.

As the belief of a resurrection is a
 strong guard against the fear of our
 own mortality, so it is a consolatory
 friend on the death of those for whom
 we entertain sentiments of regard and
 tenderness; knowing, that their bodies
 do not perish, but only sleep, in the
 dust; and that they shall shortly awake
 much more perfect and glorious than
 they were; therefore the apostle “ would
 “ not have us ignorant concerning them
 “ which are asleep, nor sorrow for them,
 “ as

“ as those that have no hope ; for if we
 “ believe that Jesus died, and rose again,
 “ even so them also that sleep in Jesus,
 “ will God bring with him.”

LASTLY, the belief of a resurrection ought to have a necessary influence on this life, by way of preparation for the next.—For, how can any man deliberately commit sin when he knows that he must rise and “ stand before the judgment-seat,” and give an account, and for ever suffer the punishment due to it.—St. Paul, who delivered the doctrine, hath also taught us by his own example what work is expected to be wrought upon our souls by it ; I “ have “ hope” (saith he) “ towards God, that “ there shall be a resurrection of the “ dead, both of the just and unjust ; “ and herein do I exercise myself to “ have a conscience void of offence to- “ wards God and towards man :” that
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we may all be able to join the apostle in this comfortable expression, God, of his infinite mercy, grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON V.

NATHAN'S REPROOF OF DAVID, WITH
SOME REFLECTIONS THEREON.

2 SAMUEL xii. 7.

THOU ART THE MAN.

THE train of sins which gave occasion to this reproof, the nature of the reproof itself, and the effect which it wrought upon the person to whom it was addressed, are as remarkable as any part of the holy scripture, and highly deserve our serious consideration.

So prone is even the just man to forsake the paths of righteousness, that David, an eminent and distinguished
F example

example of piety, fell into the most shameful train of iniquity, and continued under the guilt of the heinous sins of adultery and murder; so that he seemed (as we might justly fear) ripe for destruction.—But the mercy of God looked down upon him, and “plucked” him “as a firebrand out of the” fire.

NATHAN, the messenger of the Most High, was sent to represent his case, and to describe the measure of his guilt.—Pursuant to this important commission, he set before the royal sinner the barbarous oppression of a great and rich man, and an inhuman injury done by him to his poor helpless neighbour.—And, when David heard the surprising story, his indignation immediately arose, and he expressed just resentment at the unnatural crime; his “anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said, “as the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, “because

“because he had no pity.” Having thus, unawares, passed sentence upon himself, and shewn that utmost abhorrence at the baseness of which he himself had been guilty, the prophet struck him to the heart with his own reflections, and brought them home to him with this pointed expression, “Thou art the man.” The once hardened sinner receives the deepest impression from these powerful words, and shakes off the sleep of sin, he confesses his crime with a perfect sense of the heinousness of it; and as soon as he acknowledges his transgression, the prophet gives him this comfortable assurance, “the Lord also hath
“put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.”

THAT we may make a proper use of this example, it will be necessary to form

1st, A full and perfect notion of the baseness and heinousness of sin in general.

2ndly, Of our own particular sins, and

3rdly, To bring all our censures home, and confine them to ourselves until we utterly abhor and forsake our vices.

FIRST, We are to form a full and perfect notion of the heinousness of sin in general.—This is absolutely necessary to be done, before we can conceive a just indignation against those particular vices which have taken possession of our bosoms, and assumed ascendancy over us. We shall behold sin in its full proportion, if we consider it, as it is injurious to our Maker, our neighbour, and ourselves. With respect to God, it is offensive to a being of infinite goodness, wisdom, holiness, and justice. To provoke a being that is absolutely good in himself, and perpetually delights in conferring benefits, especially on man, carries something so shocking and horrid with it, that, if we think at all, we must

must tremble at the idea of such ingratitude. When we behold a good man tender of his fellow-creatures, and abstaining from the least appearance of injury, we cannot but highly regard and esteem him. When we find that he not only avoids the approaches of evil, but is constantly employed in contributing, as far as is in his power, to the contentment and happiness of all around him, and makes it his pleasure and delight to relieve the poor, to protect the fatherless, and to support the widow; his goodness inclines us to think his person sacred, and renders us afraid to grieve or offend him. If natural inclination thus prompt us to respect the image of God in a good man, how much more ought we to pay reverence to God himself, who is the spring of all those virtues that demand the veneration of mankind, and in whose hand the best of men are but instruments to work his pleasure?—And if it be unnatural to

injure those who act in his stead, how much more unnatural to put him to grief, who gives us all the blessings of this life, and hath made us immortal, that we might be happy to all eternity?

WE may take another view of the baseness of sin, as it is contrary to his wisdom.—God “created” us “after” his own “likeness,” and placed us but “a “little lower than the angels,” capable of attaining to a nearer resemblance of him, and of rising to an equality with his angels.—But sin debases and degrades us, blots out the lines of the divine image, and levels us with “the beasts “that perish.”—Every instance of it is folly, even in our own sight, and much more disagreeable to his unspotted holiness. Even our best actions stand in need of his pardon, for “we are all as “an unclean thing before him, and all “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.—“Behold, he putteth no trust in his
“faints;

“faints; yea, the heavens are not clean
 “in his sight; how much more abomi-
 “nable and filthy is man, which drink-
 “eth iniquity like water?” If our lesser
 spots are disagreeable to him, with what
 displeasure must he behold our grosser
 stains, and those sins that are of the
 deepest dye? .

WE will now consider how sin offends
 his justice.—Our great law-giver is infi-
 nitely just; his nature is the perfect pat-
 tern of truth and equity, and his will
 the certain and unalterable measure of
 right and wrong.—He has not given us
 laws barely to exercise his authority, or
 manifest his power; but has vouchsafed
 us a copy of himself to direct us in the
 way to happiness, and has interwoven
 our interest with our duty. His laws
 were good in themselves from all eter-
 nity, flowing from the essential goodness
 of the divine nature, and implanted in
 the nature of man at his creation:—

every sin is a deviation from them, still winding further into the paths of error, and growing crooked like the folds of the serpent. Can we imagine that a being of perfect justice will bear with our actions that wander from the rules of our duty, and are contrary to the wisdom of God and the nature of man?

HAVING considered the heinousness of sin with respect to our Maker, we are now to take a view of it as it relates to our neighbour: and we may not improperly divide it into secret injustice and open oppression, than either of which nothing is more destructive to society. With regard to injustice, no person will esteem the man guiltless who injures him either in his person by violence, or in his property by depredation.—Nor is his guilt less who blasts his neighbour's fame. Oppression implies the use of power, and is certainly the greatest abuse of it, it is exercised against the poor and defenceless
who

who are unable to resist: the oppressor
 "causes the naked to lodge without
 "clothing, that they have no covering
 "in the cold.—They are wet with the
 "showers of the mountains, and em-
 "brace the rock for want of shelter."—
 He "plucks the fatherless from the breast,
 "and takes a pledge of the poor." The
 parable of Nathan gives us a full descrip-
 tion of him.—"There were two men in
 "one city; the one rich and the other
 "poor.—The rich man had exceeding
 "many flocks and herds: but the poor
 "man had nothing save one little ewe
 "lamb, which he had bought and nou-
 "rished up: and it grew up together
 "with him, and with his children; it
 "did eat of his own meat, and drank
 "of his own cup, and lay in his bosom,
 "and was unto him as a daughter.—
 "And there came a traveller unto the
 "rich man, and he spared to take of
 "his own flock, and of his own herd,
 "to dress for the wayfaring man that
 "was

“ was come unto him, but took the poor
 “ man’s lamb, and dressed it for the
 “ man that was come to him.”—Is not
 our “ anger greatly kindled against” him
 as soon as we hear of this inhuman in-
 stance of oppression? And are we not
 ready to say with David, “ as the Lord
 “ liveth, the man that hath done this
 “ thing shall surely die?”

BUT we shall conceive a yet greater
 abhorrence of sin, if we consider it as
 injurious to ourselves.—It is this that
 extinguishes that glorious lamp reason,
 violates that faithful friend conscience,
 perverts and distracts our will, and de-
 livers up the government of our minds
 to those violent passions and affections
 that delight only in confusion.—It over-
 turns the order in which we were created,
 lays our immortal faculties level with
 the dust, engages us in the pursuit of
 improper pleasures, and devotes us to
 the service of lust.—It increases our de-
 fires

fires that we may be still tormented with enflamed passions, which, the more they are gratified, the more remote we are from satisfaction.—It fixes our thoughts upon this short uncertain life, and thereby renders us unfit for the happiness of immortality, and unworthy the rewards of eternity.—Such is the baseness and heinousness of sin in general. But, it is necessary to consider

SECONDLY, Our own particular sins.—We cannot abhor the latter, until we are brought to a just detestation of the former. We also rest in vain on a general notion of sin, unless we apply it to our own case, and draw the picture of ourselves. For, herein lies the deceit that casts a mist before us, and flatters us with false security; we readily own the baseness of sin, and cannot but acknowledge that it is justly the object of God's displeasure, and of our own hatred. We see the heinousness of it in other men,
but

but cannot so easily discern it in ourselves. We imagine that we are not guilty of the same offences, or that there are particular circumstances to mitigate and lessen our guilt. We endeavour to make an excuse for our favourite sin in those softening words, "is it not a little one?" Or, if we indulge only our prevailing infirmity, we desire to compound with the Almighty, and offer Naaman's plea, hoping, that "in this thing the Lord" will "pardon" us. But let us not be thus deceived, for it is rare that men confine themselves to one particular sin. There is a strange connection in wickedness, and one link of the chain draws on the rest. We are, perhaps, averse to this or that particular sin, but we know not how soon the aversion may be done away. One vice may be more consonant to our inclination, and another less; but our abstaining from either will not be paying a due regard to the honour

honour of God, unless we are resolved to forsake both.

LET not, therefore, any one satisfy himself in the thought that he is "not as other men are," while he is only distinguished from them by his particular failings.—Let not the drunkard boast because he is not addicted to lust.—Neither let him that is free from drunkenness rest in a vain opinion of himself, if he be the slave of pharisaical pride, villainous cunning, malicious defamation, or diabolical dissimulation.—But let every man fairly examine his own state, and all the circumstances of his guilt.—Let him consider the extent and effects of it; how many he hath injured by it, how often he hath done violence to his conscience, and how often rejected the kind admonition of the holy spirit.—What mercies he has received, what afflictions he has suffered from the hand of God, and how little
they

they have availed towards his repentance. — Such considerations will teach us in the

THIRD place, To bring all our censures home, and confine them to ourselves, until we utterly abhor and forsake our vices.

THE conduct of our lives is an affair of so much difficulty, and affords us so much matter of employment every day, that if we were resolute to discharge our duty properly, we should have no leisure to reflect on the greater world without. The real faults of those around us are so many, report and censure represent them as so many more, that if we pry into the affairs of others, we shall not have time to look into our own. One of these must be done, and the other may very well be left undone: as we cannot serve two masters, so we cannot properly

properly attend to our own failings and those of others. When we have strained our invention to aggravate our neighbour's guilt, and to lay all the odious colours of calumny upon it; when we have described him as a sinner towards God, injurious to his brother, and the worst of enemies even to himself; let us change our first design, and try whether the disagreeable character will not suit ourselves. It may be that the mirror will faithfully reflect our own image. We are, perhaps, unwilling to open our breast, and search all its recesses; we may, therefore, see ourselves by reflection; and when we have raised our indignation against a supposed criminal, we may pass sentence upon a real one, and give it the utmost force with "Thou art the man." When we judge others we may easily be deceived by false appearances, and our prejudice may pronounce too severe a censure. But in ourselves we
are

are not liable to be thus mistaken; and if we deal faithfully with our souls, and acknowledge with David that we "have sinned against the Lord," our conscience will tell us in the words of Nathan, "the Lord also hath put away" our "sin," and we "shall not die."

SERMON

SERMON VI.

ON THE INSTITUTION, NATURE, END,
DESIGN, AND CELEBRATION OF THE
SACRAMENT.

I COR. XI. 25.

AFTER THE SAME MANNER ALSO HE TOOK THE
CUP, WHEN HE HAD SUPPED, SAYING, THIS
CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD:
THIS DO YE, AS OFT AS YE DRINK IT, IN
REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

THE words of the text are part
of the history St. Paul gives us of this
latter sacrament, exactly agreeable to the
account which three of the evangelists
give of the same institution.—The occa-
sion of the repetition in this place by the
apostle was, the disorderly manner with
which the Corinthians communicated;

G

who,

who, by reason of many divisions among themselves, and through the pride of the rich despising the poor, received this sacrament without that devotion suitable to so sacred an ordinance, "not discerning the Lord's body," not distinguishing it sufficiently from a worldly common feast, not considering the design of the action, nor having their minds prepared with due reverence to approach the table of the Lord. To remedy this, the apostle thought no argument more proper than to repeat to them the very words of our Lord's institution, which, containing a plain account of the end and design of the sacrament, could not but put them to shame, and be a strong reproof of their unworthy behaviour. For, if they considered, that what they were then doing was in remembrance of the death and passion of Christ, who gave himself a ransom for them, for this very end, that he might redeem them from all worldly and inordinate desires; it was not

not possible that, at the very time of communicating, they should have despised their poor brethren, and treated them with uncharitable contempt ; if they considered, that the holy work in which they were then engaged, was a solemn shewing forth of Christ's death, a solemn profession of their belief in a crucified Saviour, of their hope of salvation through the merits of his death only, who died equally for poor and rich, for the mean and for the honourable, and commanded that they, who would be his disciples, should " love one another," and be examples of charity to the whole world ; nothing could be a stronger reproof of their careless conduct, none more instructive for the future, than to repeat, as St. Paul here does, the solemn words of our Lord's own institution, which so plainly express the end and design of his holy sacrament. " For I have received," says he, " of the " Lord, that which also I delivered unto

G 2

" you

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G 2

"you

“you, that the Lord Jesus, the same
 “night in which he was betrayed, took
 “bread, and when he had given thanks,
 “he brake it, and said, Take, eat;
 “this is my body which is broken for
 “you: this do in remembrance of me.
 “After the same manner also he took
 “the cup, when he had supped, saying,
 “This cup is the new testament in my
 “blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink
 “it, in remembrance of me:” i. e. in
 commemoration of my death and passion,
 shewing forth “the Lord’s death till he
 “come.”

In discoursing upon these words, the
 first thing proper to be observed in them,
 and considered, is, the general nature,
 end, and design of this holy communion,
 expressed by our Saviour in these phrases,
 “this is my body which is broken for
 “you;” and, “this cup is the new tes-
 “tament in my blood; this do ye, as
 “oft as ye drink it, in remembrance
 “of

for

“ of me : ” i. e. let it be a perpetual solemn commemoration of my death and passion, and a continual occasion of your meditating upon the spiritual benefits purchased to you thereby.—Meditate seriously and devoutly on the wonderful love of God, in sending into the world no meaner a person than his own Son, to become a sacrifice and propitiation for all sins, forsaken and amended. Meditate on the love of Christ in submitting willingly “ to death, even the death of the “ cross,” to accomplish this merciful and gracious design ; for “ greater love hath “ no man than this, that a man lay down “ his life for his friends.”—Think, with a just sense, upon the humility and condescension of him, “ who being in the “ form of God,” did not affect to appear like unto God ; “ but made himself “ of no reputation, and took upon him “ the form of a servant, and was made “ in the likeness of men ; and being
found “ ~~formed~~ in fashion as a man, ~~to~~ hum-

“bled himself, and became obedient unto
“death, even the death of the cross.”—

Consider, with due affection of mind, the vile and heinous nature of sin, which was the occasion of such humiliation to the Son of God, in order to expiate and purchase pardon for it: and let your frequent eating this bread, and drinking this cup, be a constant remembrancer to your thoughts, an assistance to your devotions, and a perpetual renewing of these spiritual meditations.—“Do this
“in remembrance of me.”

THE mind of man in this life is so constantly furrounded and affected with outward sensible objects, that it can with great difficulty confine itself to, and conceive of things spiritual: so that to meditate with any closeness and application upon things remote from our senses, is one of the most difficult parts of our duty; and the omission of such meditation one of the greatest occasions of sin.

For,

For, the chief reason, why men who seem conscious of the truth of religion, of the certainty of a judgment to come, and who will readily acknowledge the disproportion between things temporal and eternal, yet, in their practice prefer earthly to spiritual things, temporal to eternal concerns; the chief reason of this, I say, is want of frequent and serious consideration; and the reason why they do not consider is, because their minds are so wholly taken up, and their attention so constantly employed about things of this world, that either they turn not their thoughts at all towards things spiritual; or, if they do, yet these have so little effect, that they are presently shaken off, and leave no lasting impression behind.—In consideration of this weak and depraved state of man's soul, God, who is a spirit, whom no man hath or can see, has always represented himself unto mankind, under the affectionate character of being author of some

great work, worthy of himself, and for the good of mankind: that so men might neither, on the one hand, have any occasion given to frame to themselves any likeness or similitude of him; nor, on the other side, want a just idea of him, upon which they might fix their thoughts and meditations.—Thus, to the patriarchs he styled himself “God who created the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein.”—To the nation of the Jews, “God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”—To us christians, “God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—And because the great end of religion is to imitate God in holiness, justice, mercy and truth, he has set us an example of that life, in his son Christ Jesus, clothing him in flesh, and sending him to dwell among us, that he might “leave us a” visible and sensible “example, that” we might “follow his steps.”

FURTHER.—

FURTHER.—Because men are as little apt to remember as they are to apprehend things of a spiritual nature, God has generally been pleased to keep up spiritual notions, after we have once received them, by the same help of “ outward and visible signs :” for such is our frame, that any sensible memorial makes a deeper and more lasting impression upon us, than a mere historical account of the fact to be remembered ; and the more appropriate it is, the more forcibly does it strike us.

WHEN God entered into covenant with Abraham, “ to be a God unto him, “ and to his seed after him,” he instituted the rite of circumcision, for a memorial to after generations ; “ and it “ shall be,” says he, “ a token of the “ covenant betwixt me and you.”—In like manner, under the Mosaical institution, several sensible signs were vouchsafed to the Jews, for preserving in their minds

minds a continual remembrance of God's commands, or for lasting memorials of some peculiar blessing; of this we have several instances in the books of the law; but the most remarkable of all, and that which bears greatest analogy to our sacramental remembrance of Christ in the eucharist, is the feast of the passover, instituted in commemoration of the miraculous deliverance of the people of the Jews out of Egypt, when the Lord "passed over the houses of the children of Israel," but "smote all the first born in the land of Egypt."

THE bringing of the Israelites out of Egypt was the greatest and most wonderful deliverance that had ever been vouchsafed to any nation: such an amazing instance of the power and providence of God over them, must (we may imagine) have made an indelible impression upon their minds.—Yet, we find that very people, even that very generation who

who had seen all those things, “ forgot
 “ God’s works and his wonders that he
 “ had shewed them; they kept not the
 “ covenant of God, but refused to walk
 “ in his law; they sinned yet more against
 “ him, and provoked the Most Highest
 “ in the wilderness.”—How much less
 would the remembrance of that great
 work have influenced the minds of after
 generations, had not God appointed such a
 memorial of it, as, by its constant return,
 and fitness to represent the “ thing fig-
 “ nified,” might always preserve it fresh
 in their memories, and oblige them to
 teach their children the same? We find
 in the histories of all nations, that some-
 thing like this was their usual manner
 of impressing upon their minds a sense
 of great and remarkable blessings, and
 of preserving the memory of their most
 eminent benefactors.

THIS is the method which God has
 been pleased to make use of with us
 christians

christians likewise.—“ The sacrifice of
 “ the death of Christ,” (which is the
 foundation of forgiveness) is inestimably
 the greatest benefit that was ever conferred on the sons of men; the fountain and spring, the original and foundation of all other blessings; so the apostle justly argues, “ he that spared not his own
 “ son, but delivered him up for us all,
 “ how shall he not with him also freely
 “ give us all things?”—It was a blessing of which the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt was but a type and a figure; if that shadow, therefore, was to be solemnly commemorated by the passover, how much more does the substance itself of this eternal blessing deserve to be perpetually kept in mind with the highest veneration.

THAT this might be done the more effectually, our Saviour, in consideration of the weakness of the apprehension and memory of man in spiritual matters, has
 thought

thought fit to institute such representations of what he has done and suffered for us; as might the most effectually conduce to the spiritual ends designed in the sacrament; that is, such symbols as might present him to our minds, rather than to our bodily senses, as might assist the meditations of the soul, and excite devotion; yet, at the same time, not be liable to degenerate into occasions of superstition.—The bread is appointed to be broken, and the wine poured out, to remind us, in a spiritual manner, how his body was broken, and his blood shed for us.—And this he has commanded us to do always “in remembrance of “him,” shewing forth “the Lord’s “death,” through all generations, ’till his second coming.—But to do this worthily, we must so commemorate his death, as to die ourselves “unto sin,” and forsaking every evil way, rise ourselves unto “newness of life.”—More especially at the solemn return of those
great

by facts
 great festivals, set apart in remembrance
 of his nativity, passion, and resurrection.
 His birth in human flesh was the hu-
 miliation of himself to a capacity of
 suffering death for our sakes; and his
 resurrection after death was the evidence
 and demonstration of his sufferings be-
 ing accepted in the sight of God.—He
 “died for our sins,” that he might ex-
 piate them by his blood, and he “rose
 “again for our justification.—He offered
 “himself once a sacrifice for sin, and
 “then for ever sat down at the right
 “hand of God, having by one offering
 “for ever perfected them that are sanc-
 “tified.—Christ our passover is sacrificed
 “for us: therefore let us keep the feast.—
 “Not with the old leaven, nor with the
 “leaven of malice and wickedness: but
 “with the unleavened bread of sincerity
 “and truth.”—To such as are sincere,
 and heartily desire so to do, there can
 be no better assistance than frequently
 and worthily receiving this holy com-
 munion.—

munion.—Let us, therefore, with hearts steadfastly resolute to forsake every sin, partake of this holy feast, in the manner our Lord himself has appointed.—And that it may have an effectual influence upon us to imitate him in his life, whom otherwise we do but mock when we commemorate his death, God of his infinite mercy grant through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SERMON

S E R M O N VII.

**GOD OUR UNIVERSAL DEFENDER
AND DELIVERER.**

PSALM xxxvii. 5.

**COMMIT THY WAY UNTO THE LORD: TRUST
ALSO IN HIM, AND HE SHALL BRING IT
TO PASS.**

THE children of men are taught, by daily experience, that this life is beset with innumerable dangers and calamities, and that our knowledge is very imperfect; too incomprehensive to measure the compass of our wants, or to invent proper means of providing for them.—Our wisdom is puzzled with difficulties that daily arise, and we are unable to extricate ourselves from them.—

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Our

Our weighty designs frequently miscarry, for want of foresight, power, or skill to prevent the infinite hazards and disappointments to which human affairs are subject; and he would do a very acceptable piece of service, who could direct, in this great perplexity, to whom we should fly for protection against the evil we would avoid, and for help to obtain the good we desire. This is done in the words of the text.—“Commit thy way
“unto the Lord: trust also in him, and
“he shall bring it to pass.”

Let us, therefore, consider

1st, The reasonableness of trusting in God, from the consideration of those perfections in him which call for this confidence.

2ndly, From our own experience, that we should continue to trust in him, of whose goodness we have already been partakers.

3rdly,

3rdly, The means whereby we may improve this grace.

I. ONE great requisite in a friend from whom we expect protection or relief, is, that he be acquainted with the nature of our circumstances; otherwise, be his inclination in our favour ever so strong, we may be destroyed by the weight of calamity, before his hand is stretched out to save us.—But in God, whose understanding is infinite, and whose eye pervades all creation, inadvertency cannot exist. Be our condition what it may; if inward grief and uneasiness, our most secret thoughts, our most inward groanings are not concealed from him.—If we labour under bodily pains or sickness, he understands the best means of relief, and the most proper seasons of application; if under poverty or want, he knows where all the riches of the world are stored, and can “fill,” when he pleases, our “belly with hid treasure;”

if under danger or distress, he is infinitely wise, and can contrive such means of safety and deliverance as will surmount all difficulties and perplexities.—So that, under the consideration of this perfection, namely, his infinite wisdom, we may cry out with the psalmist, “God
 “is our hope and strength, a very pre-
 “sent help in trouble.—God is in the
 “midst of us, therefore shall we not
 “be removed.—God shall help, and that
 “right early.—For the Lord of hosts is
 “with us: the God of Jacob is our
 “refuge.”

BUT it is not enough that the friend to whom we apply for succour in time of need be acquainted with our condition, he should likewise be possessed of power to remove the evil of which we complain, and to procure the good for which we have occasion.—We, therefore, may observe, that there is nothing which nature has formed, or art contrived for
 our

our defence, that the psalmist omits in expressing the power of God to defend his servants in time of trouble.—“ The Lord
 “ is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer,
 “ my God, my strength in whom I will
 “ trust, my buckler, the horn also of my
 “ salvation, and my high tower.”

Nor is it enough that the friend to whom we look for protection have the power to supply our wants, and to ward off the dangers that surround us, unless he be disposed so to do. The same psalmist, therefore, has assured us, that God is not only good in his own nature, but universally so to all his creatures; good to the pious without reserve, and to the wicked if they will repent and forsake their sins.—“ The Lord is
 “ good: and his tender mercies are over
 “ all his works.—The goodness of God
 “ endureth continually.—Thou, Lord, art
 “ good, and ready to forgive, and plentiful in mercy unto all them that call

“upon thee.”—To the higher conditions
 of life he pays no partial attention.—
 Among men poverty is frequently the
 cause by which favour and kindness are
 withdrawn.—With God the effect is to-
 tally contrary; for, though his mercy
 and goodness extend to all, yet are they
 more especially concerned for such as are
 in a state of misery; as the fatherless,
 the widow, the prisoner, the poor, the
 stranger, and the friendless.—From a
 sense of this, we find the devout in all
 ages trusting not in man, but flying
 to God for shelter when they found
 the cloud approaching.—“Our fathers
 “trusted in thee: and thou didst deliver
 “them.—They called upon thee, and
 “were holpen: they put their trust in
 “thee, and were not confounded.—O go
 “not from me, for trouble is hard at
 “hand: and there is none to help me.—
 “O Lord, thou art my succour; haste
 “thee to help me.—Deliver my soul from
 “the sword: my darling from the power
 “of

“of the dog.”—God has promised to afford his blessing to those that trust in him; and we are assured that “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous: and his ears are open to their prayers.” With confidence, therefore, “commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

B II. Thus, if we look into the nature of God, we find strong and undeniable arguments to induce us, in all our trouble and distress, to rely upon him for relief.—If we turn our eyes towards ourselves, and, in the second place, consult our own experience of his former loving-kindness, we shall perceive abundant reason to continue the same trust in him for the future.—For, of the various calamities incident to human life, how many, through the goodness of God, have we escaped?—How many, immediately impending over our heads, and which we saw no possibility of avoiding,

has

has his watchful providence averted?—
 How many, after they had taken hold
 of us, and begun to press hard upon
 us, has he at first abated, and at last
 totally removed?—And how many by
 his over-ruling providence have had so
 good an effect, that we have reason to
 rejoice in having been visited by them?
 Have we never by painful lingering sick-
 nesses been brought to the brink of the
 grave, and, when all probable means of
 recovery failed, by some unexpected turn
 restored to health again?—Has our good
 name never been aspersed by base and
 malicious calumny, under which we have
 long laboured, without being able to
 clear our reputation, and has not God,
 by his good providence, brought forth
 our “righteousness as the light: and
 “our just dealing as the noon-day?”—
 Have we never seen poverty coming upon
 us as an armed man, when, on a sudden,
 God has raised up unhopd for benefac-
 tors, or struck out for us unforeseen
 means

means of subsistence?—Have we never known the wrath of men set against us, when, without offence, they came gaping upon us, and were ready to “swallow us up quick,” and God has either restrained the fierceness of their anger, or covered us, as it were, “under the shadow of his wings, until their tyranny has been overpast?”

If, then, we have experienced such instances of the Lord's goodness, from the sense of past mercies we may draw this comfortable conclusion; that he, who has delivered us from such great dangers, will still continue our “helper and defender.”—For, his hand, which has been so often stretched forth in our favour, is not since shortened; neither is his ear, which has been so often open to our prayers, grown heavy. Commit we, then, our souls to him in well-doing, and the proof we have already seen of his watchful care over us, will
be

be a lasting conviction, that, in all circumstances of difficulty and distress, “ he
 “ will defend us under his wings, under
 “ his feathers we shall be safe : his faith-
 “ fulness and truth shall be our shield
 “ and buckler.”

III. If, therefore, our trust and reliance upon God under all the pains of body and anxiety of mind, under all the frowns of fortune and difficulties of life which we have experienced, and all the apprehensions of evil which we fear may befall us, be both our duty and our remedy, it is a matter well worth enquiry, in the third place, by what means and considerations this happy temper of mind may be begotten and nourished in us.—For this purpose we must divest ourselves of all presumption and self-confidence, we must follow this advice of the wisest of men, “ trust in
 “ the Lord with all thine heart; and
 “ lean not unto thine own understand-
 “ ing.—

“ing.—In all thy ways acknowledge
 “him, and he shall direct thy paths.”—
 For, as he says in another place, “he
 “that trusteth in his own heart is a
 “fool.”—The truth of which is incon-
 trovertible: since, considering the state
 of human nature, there is absolute ne-
 cessity for something more powerful than
 ourselves to which we may have recourse
 for succour and support in time of need.
 Man, even at best, is but a feeble and
 infirm creature. From the weakness of
 his mind and the disorder of his pas-
 sions, from the troubles and difficulties
 he has to encounter, together with the
 mutability of all human affairs, it is
 impossible that he should live indepen-
 dent.—Evils there are innumerable, from
 which, neither the wisdom of the most
 prudent, the riches of the most wealthy,
 the forces of the most powerful, nor even
 the virtue of the most innocent, can al-
 ways render us secure.—Faith, hope, and
 trust, are necessary in our present state:
 and

and very unhappy must that man be who has no resource in his necessities exclusive of himself. If support, then, be necessary, we can seek it no where so well as in the hands of the Almighty.—For where can we find safer direction than in all-comprehending wisdom?—Where better protection than in omnipotence?—Where more ample provision than in goodness infinite?

SINCE, therefore, the necessity of relying on something, the folly of depending on ourselves, and the wisdom of trusting in God are so apparent, these considerations should frequently occupy our attention; and we should remember the promises he has made of his readiness both to guard us in danger, and to relieve us in want.—With respect to the former, the psalmist thus expresses himself; “because thou hast made the Lord
“which is my refuge: even the Most
“High thy habitation: there shall no
“evil

“ evil befall thee, neither shall any plague
 “ come nigh thy dwelling.—For he shall
 “ give his angels charge over thee, to
 “ keep thee in all thy ways.—They shall
 “ bear thee up in their hands, lest thou
 “ dash thy foot against a stone.”——

And, with regard to the latter, the comfortable words of our Saviour are these;

“ take no thought for your life, what
 “ ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;
 “ nor yet for your body what ye shall
 “ put on: is not the life more than
 “ meat, and the body than raiment?—
 “ Behold the fowls of the air; for they
 “ sow not, neither do they reap, nor
 “ gather into barns, yet your heavenly
 “ Father feedeth them.—Are ye not
 “ much better than they? And why take
 “ ye thought for raiment? Consider the
 “ lilies of the field how they grow; they
 “ toil not, neither do they spin.—And
 “ yet I say unto you, that even Solomon
 “ in all his glory, was not arrayed like
 “ one of these. Wherefore, if God so
 “ clothe

" clothe the grafs of the field, which to-
 " day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the
 " oven, ſhall he not much more clothe
 " you, O ye of little faith?—Therefore
 " take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we
 " eat? or what ſhall we drink? or where-
 " withal ſhall we be clothed?—For your
 " heavenly Father knoweth that ye have
 " need of all theſe things.—But ſeek
 " ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his
 " righteouſneſs, and all theſe things
 " ſhall be added unto you."——Here,
 then, is the greateſt encouragement that
 can be to " commit thy way unto the
 " Lord: truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall
 " bring it to paſs."

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

HOLINESS OF LIFE REQUISITE TO A
TRUE PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIANITY.

2 Tim. ii. 19. *latter part.*

LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME
OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

BY every one that nameth the name of Christ is meant every one who professeth christianity, which profession is made at baptism, when the person baptized receives a name which is therefore called a christian name. The interrogatory in our catechism, "What is your name?" in effect requires the person answering to declare what religion

ligion he professes; by telling his name he declares himself a follower of Christ, and professor of his religion by whose name he is called. To every one, who thus nameth the name of Christ, the apostle's exhortation is "let him depart from iniquity;" I shall, therefore, consider

1st, What we are to understand by departing from iniquity.

2ndly, I shall endeavour to shew the obligation that results from Christ's name so to do.

By departing from iniquity two things are plainly intended: one, to "eschew" all such "things" as "are contrary to "our profession:" the other, to "follow "all such as are agreeable to the same." Both these are more fully expressed in St. Paul's epistle to Titus.—"The grace "of God, that bringeth salvation" (that is

is the grace of God by which we are admitted to be christians, and called to a state of salvation) “teaches us, that
 “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
 “we should live soberly, righteously, and
 “godly in this present world.” These and all other parts of the christian life are implied in departing from iniquity, in which more is included than seems to be expressed.

THE christian religion is an institution of the strictest piety; its precepts are all holy, just, and good; its promises are encouragements to a virtuous life; its threats terrors of the Lord to deter men from all evil and sinful courses: when we enter into it we profess to believe the truth of all these things; and not barely to own and acknowledge the truth of them; but, to regulate our conduct, and to lead a life like men who are convinced of the certainty of such things.

Now, all sin and wickedness is directly contrary to this profession: to "depart from iniquity," therefore, is to shun all things that are contrary to the christian profession. But, this is not all; for, the apostle charges all those "that name the name of Christ" not only "to eschew" all such "things" as "are contrary to their profession," but, likewise to "follow all such things as "are agreeable to the same:" this is the second part of every christian's duty. The former is expressed in the epistle to Titus by "denying ungodliness and "worldly lusts;" the latter by "living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this "present world." It is not enough to cease to do evil, though that be considerable progress in our christian profession, but we must learn to do well to complete that character. To abandon vice is only half our duty, to fulfil it we must live in the practice of virtue: we must not be negative in discharge of
our

our baptismal engagement, we must be positive: for, Christ “gave himself for “us,” not only to “redeem us from all “iniquity,” but to “purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good “works.”—The christian profession requires purity of heart and chastity of body: and, therefore, directs us, as, to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of *the* “flesh,” so, to “perfect holiness in the “fear of God.” To act suitably to our profession, is, to love, honour, and fear our Creator; to practice universal honesty and charity; and to preserve an unspotted chastity and sobriety.—These things are agreeable to our profession; to live in the practice of them is to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith “we are called;” it is to act as becometh those who sincerely profess and believe the gospel of Christ. In a word: to “depart from iniquity” is to forsake all vicious and sinful courses: and, as the desertion of one way naturally engages

us in the pursuit of another, to depart from the paths of sin will lead us into those of holiness and virtue, in which all who "name the name of Christ" are required to walk: this leads me

SECONDLY, To consider the obligation that results from Christ's name so to do.—Every one who takes the name of christian acknowledges Christ for his teacher, becomes his disciple, and as such submits himself to him as his preceptor and instructor: and with great advantage to himself he may do so: for, we may say with Nicodemus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God:" since, "no man could do the miracles which thou hast done, except God were with him."—He who acknowledges Christ for his instructor must necessarily conform to the precepts which he has laid down as a rule of conduct for all those who become his disciples, and these are contained in the admonitions,

admonitions, in the promises; and in the threats of the gospel. Seeing, then, that the design of all these is to induce men to subdue sin, and to engage them in the practice of holiness and virtue; they who are Christ's disciples are bound by reason and conscience to act accordingly.—Likewise, “every one that nameth the name of Christ” owns himself a follower of his example, takes him for his guide and pattern, and consequently stands obliged (as far as human frailty will admit) to imitate him.—“Let” the same “mind,” says the apostle, “be in you which was in Christ Jesus; and walk in love, as he also hath loved us.” Our Saviour, frequently, in the holy gospel, proposes himself as an example to us, and directs that we should “learn of” him, and tread in his steps. The scriptures often represent him under those titles which render him a pattern for our imitation: he is called our *Prince*, and the *Captain* of our salvation, which

terms import that he has gone every step before us, and thereby marked out the path that we should pursue.—

Now, Christ having given us the highest example of holiness and virtue, for he “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,” but “was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” all who call themselves christians are bound to follow his steps, and as nearly as possible to approach him by a pious imitation of his holy life. Every one that nameth the name of Christ is under the most solemn obligation to depart from iniquity.—

Into this they entered at their baptism, and renew it every time they partake of the Lord's supper: they must, therefore, either depart from iniquity or violate the most solemn engagements, and, unless they deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, they must break the most sacred vows and promises.

THUS,

THUS, we see the many and great reasons that arise from the name of christians to lead holy and virtuous lives; it remains only that I exhort you to live worthy the vocation wherewith ye are called. Let no one debase the high and honourable title which he bears, or wear it as an empty and insignificant name; remember whose it is, and what it imports, and labour to live and act suitably to it.—We should be sorrowful to be esteemed unworthy the appellation of christians; let us, then, not delude ourselves with the mere title, but fulfil the noble character, and make good our profession by acting according to it.—To this end consider the reasonableness of so doing, together with the indecency and impropriety of the contrary.—What can be more consonant to good sense and good manners than to be what we profess?—And what more opposite than to pretend to what we never perform?—To live as becomes those who have enlisted

listened under the banner of Christ, is to adorn our profession, and to bring honour to the cause of our Captain and Redeemer: to tread in the contrary path, is to bring disgrace on ourselves here, and misery hereafter.—When we conduct ourselves according to the precepts of christianity, our great master (without doubt) observes, with approbation, the dutiful attention of his sincere disciples; we become ornaments of our most holy religion, and recommend it to the practice of mankind.—But when we desert the line so clearly marked out by our all-merciful Guide, and graciously recommended by his example, we are the enemies of him, who underwent such signal indignities and sufferings in friendship to us, and the colleagues of those who atheistically combine in setting his unspeakable kindnesses at nought, and impiously (though ineffectually) contend against the power of the Almighty.—The common ties of morality bind us
to

to a reciprocation of good offices, and he who neglects the mutual discharge of benefits conferred, is justly accused of ingratitude. What recompense can we make to the Son of God for all the blessings he has bestowed upon us? It is not in our power to make any return in the most distant degree adequate to the mercies we have received, but it is our duty to exert our utmost ability in fulfilling those promises in which we have engaged, and acting according to those precepts which our gracious Redeemer has laid down for our observance.

To live answerably to our profession is a matter of great comfort here, and will bring a reward infinitely greater hereafter; it entitles to all the glorious promises of the gospel, and gives an undoubted right to all that Christ has obtained and purchased for his church. By so doing we shall become "meet to
 " be partakers of the inheritance of the
 " faints

“saints in light,” and, “shall receive the
 “crown of life, which the Lord hath
 “promised to them that love him.” The
 nominal christian, who assumes the name
 of Christ for sinister purposes, and wears
 his profession as a cloak to evil practices,
 will have his portion with hypocrites and
 unbelievers; his glorious pretences, so far
 from being conducive to the blessings to
 which he so vainly affects to aspire, will
 only sink him into deeper condemnation.
 The heathen, who had no knowledge
 of a Redeemer, and who, consequently,
 could make no profession of him, will
 be in a better situation at the last day
 than he who pretends to be his follower,
 but does not conduct himself suitably to
 that character. Our Saviour himself de-
 clares, that “it shall be more tolerable
 “for Tyre and Sidon,” who wanted the
 means of knowledge, than for Chorazin
 and Bethsaida who made bad use of them.
 St. Peter tells us that it is “better not
 “to have known the way of righteouf-
 “ness,

“ nefs, than having known it, to turn
 “ from the holy commandment.—Many,”
 faith Chrift, “ will fay to me in that”
 (i. e. the laft) “ day, Lord, Lord, have
 “ we not prophesied in thy name? and
 “ in thy name done many wonderful
 “ works? Yet, if they imitate him not
 in the ways of righteoufnefs, their fen-
 tence will be “ depart from me, ye that
 “ work iniquity.”

To conclude.—By entering into the
 christian engagement we are admitted to
 privileges great and glorious, we are
 “ made members of Chrift, children of
 “ God, and inheritors of the kingdom
 “ of heaven.”—Let us, therefore, ftand
 upon the dignity of our christian name,
 and diligently guard againft every tempta-
 tion that may induce us to caft fpot or
 blemifh upon it: let us endeavour, as
 far as we are able, to adorn our holy
 religion by the practice of virtue, pu-
 rity, and piety, and thereby fecure to
 ourfelves

ourselves a reward infinitely beyond what the power of words can express, or the heart of man conceive, of which that we may all be partakers, God, of his great mercy, grant, through the merits and mediation of his Son our Advocate, Mediator, and Saviour. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

ASCENSION.

LUKE XXIV. 51.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHILE HE BLESSED
THEM, HE WAS PARTED FROM THEM, AND
CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN.

THE first care of our blessed Lord, in consequence of his resurrection, was to satisfy his disciples fully of the certainty of it: the next, to fit them for instructing mankind in his religion, the truth of which was confirmed by his having overcome death.—He, therefore, shewed himself alive to them, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking
ing

ing of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Having completed his ministry on earth, the time was arrived when he should ascend to that happy place from whence his compassion to a lost world had induced him to descend, according to the words of his own prayer; "Father, the hour is come; I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—There did not remain any further reason for his appearance amongst men till he should come again to judge the quick and dead. And though the redemption of mankind was completed by him, as far as in this world it could be, yet there was an important part to be finished above. The Jewish dispensation was "a shadow of good things to come:" and as the high priest yearly, when he had slain the paschal lamb, entered alone with the

the

the blood into the most holy place, there to offer it before the Lord, and to atone for the sins of the people; so was our blessed Saviour first, as the Lamb of God, to be sacrificed for our sins on earth, and then, as the High Priest of our profession, to enter with his own blood into Heaven, the true Holy Place (of which the other was a figure) there to appear with it in the presence of God for us; and thus, having "offered one sacrifice for sins," he was "for ever to sit down at the right hand of God."

When the time, therefore, was come for this purpose of divine wisdom to take place, having gradually prepared the minds of his apostles to bear his departure, he, in the last place, with his usual tenderness, gave them all a solemn blessing, the words of which are not delivered to us, but probably they might not have been unlike those which we find

find were used by him, for their consolation, on a more distant prospect of his being taken from them.—“ Let not
 “ your heart be troubled: ye believe in
 “ God, believe also in me.—I go to prepare a place for you: and I will come
 “ again, and receive you unto myself,
 “ that where I am there ye may be also.
 “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name,
 “ that will I do.—And I will pray the
 “ Father, and he shall give you another
 “ Comforter, that he may abide with
 “ you for ever.—Peace I leave with you,
 “ my peace I give unto you, not as the
 “ world giveth, give I unto you.—Let
 “ not your heart be troubled, neither let
 “ it be afraid.—It is expedient for you
 “ that I go away: for if I go not away,
 “ the Comforter will not come unto you;
 “ but if I depart, I will send him unto
 “ you.—And your heart shall rejoice, and
 “ your joy no man taketh from you.—
 “ These things I have spoken unto you,
 “ that

“ that in me ye might have peace.—In
 “ the world ye shall have tribulation :
 “ but be of good cheer, I have over-
 “ come the world.”

PROBABLY, with words of grace and affection similar to these, which every good christian may and ought to consider as spoken to himself, did our Lord before his departure comfort his disciples under that interesting event.—“ And it
 “ came to pass, while he blessed them, he
 “ was parted from them, and carried up
 “ into heaven.”

IT is hardly possible to conceive stronger or more various emotions of mind, than those with which we may suppose the breast of every one of his followers must have been filled on this occasion.—Of wonder and astonishment at what they had seen, of gratitude and tenderness in return for what they had heard, of grief and fear concerning their own solitary
 K condition,

condition, yet, mingled at the same time with submission, and hope, and faithful trust in their dear Lord. But, as he himself had told them, “if they loved him, “they would rejoice because he went to “the Father,” so in fact this prevailed over the rest, and triumphant gladness of heart took possession of, and dwelt with them.—“They worshipped him, “and returned to Jerusalem with great “joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”

LET us, then, rejoice also in this glorious exaltation of Christ our head.—Let us consider the opportunity it gives of exercising that faith in him which the apostle justly calls “the evidence of “things not seen,” and of obtaining reward suitable to the piety and virtue we shew in conducting aright our understandings, our hearts, and lives, under a lower, yet sufficient degree of evidence in favour of his holy religion.—“Because
“thou

"thou hast seen me," faith he himself to
 St. Thomas, "thou hast believed: blef-
 "fed are they that have not seen, and
 "yet have believed."——The means of
 acquiring this happy state, therefore, he
 has, by his glorious ascension, left to his
 whole church: "that the trial of your
 "faith," as St. Peter expresses it, "may
 "be found unto praise, and honour, and
 "glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ:
 "whom, having not seen, ye love; in
 "whom, though now ye see him not, yet
 "believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeak-
 "able and full of glory; receiving the
 "end of your faith, even the salvation of
 "your souls."——Let us consider that if
 his absence try our faith, the manner of
 his going away powerfully confirms it:
 for, the apostles were eye-witnesses of
 his ascending into the clouds; and, what
 stronger proof can we require of his
 coming from God, than that he was again
 taken up to him, according to his own
 repeated predictions?

NOR let it appear strange that the scriptures should speak of one especial place as the peculiar residence of the Almighty. We acknowledge that he is, and cannot but be, every where; "heaven and earth are full of the majesty of his glory: the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain him.—Whither," then, "shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?—If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.—If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."——Nevertheless, the scriptures constantly mention him as having condescended to establish his throne in one particular place, and as exhibiting himself there in the symbol of light; where, therefore, his holy angels attend upon him, and at his pleasure see his face; from whence he
 issues

issues forth his commands, and is represented as viewing and observing the actions of his creatures, and pouring down blessings or vengeance as their behaviour may require.—“The Lord is
 “in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne
 “is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eye-
 “lids try the children of men.—In his
 “presence is fulness of joy,” and “at
 “his right hand are pleasures for ever-
 “more.”——Into this blessed place did our Saviour ascend, and there, as the scriptures phrase it, “sat down on the
 “right hand of God.”—Not that God hath any bodily members, nor that Christ is confined to this or that posture or place: but, that he is raised, in respect of his human nature, to a rank and station above all creatures; possessed of the fullest happiness, the highest honour, and most sovereign authority:—that authority with which Daniel foretells his being invested: “I saw, and behold, one
 “like the son of man, came with the
 K 3 clouds

“ clouds of heaven, and came to the an-
 “ cient of days, and they brought him
 “ near before him : and there was given
 “ him dominion, and glory, and a king-
 “ dom, that all people, nations, and lan-
 “ guages should serve him : his dominion
 “ is an everlasting dominion, which shall
 “ not pass away, and his kingdom that
 “ which shall not be destroyed.” — The
 completion in a material degree of which
 prophecy is thus recorded by the apostle :
 — “ God raised him from the dead, and
 “ set him at his own right hand in the
 “ heavenly places, far above all principali-
 “ ty, and power, and might, and dominion,
 “ and every name that is named, not only
 “ in this world, but also in that which
 “ is to come : that at the name of Jesus
 “ every knee should bow, of things in
 “ heaven, and things in earth, and things
 “ under the earth :” and “ he must reign,
 “ till he hath put all enemies under his
 “ feet.” — Sitting at God’s right hand
 implies his exalted station, “ for to which
 “ of

“of the angels said God at any time,
 “sit on my right hand, until I make
 “thine enemies thy footstool?”

LET us meditate not only upon the nature of our Saviour's exaltation, but, upon what principally concerns us, the benefits which mankind derive from it; viz. his sending the holy spirit to abide for ever with his people, his intercession for his church with the Father, and his powerful protection of it against its enemies.

I. His sending the holy Spirit.—This was reserved with great wisdom till after his ascension; both, because this mission was then most wanted to comfort his disciples under the loss of his personal presence; and, also, on account of affording further evidence of his divine power; since, far from being in a worse condition, in consequence of his departure, they were favoured by the descent

of the holy Spirit with miraculous gifts in a higher degree than ever they had been before.—St. John, therefore, upon our Saviour promising the Spirit to those who should believe in him, observes, “ the
 “ holy Ghōst was not yet given, because
 “ Jesus was not yet glorified.”—And St. Peter, on the day when the apostles
 “ were filled with the holy Ghōst,” saith,
 “ therefore, being by the right hand of
 “ God exalted, and having received of
 “ the Father the promise of the holy
 “ Ghōst, he hath shed forth this which
 “ ye now see and hear.”—The miraculous gifts of the holy Ghōst, indeed, being no longer necessary, ceased many ages ago; but, sanctification and the ordinary assistance of the holy Spirit, much more important blessings, of which we shall always stand in need, continue still, and make or constitute his present share in the work of our redemption, agreeable to the assurance our blessed Lord has given of “ another Comforter to abide with us
 “ for ever.”

II. Christ's

II. Christ's intercession with the Father.—For, his oblation of himself being accepted as the foundation of a new covenant of mercy and favour, we have now an advocate in heaven certain to prevail: “an high priest which can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all “points as we are,” ever “appearing in “the presence of God for us,” and efficaciously pleading the pardon that he hath purchased for all who repent and forsake their sins.—“Who,” then, “is “he that condemneth? It is Christ that “died, yea, rather that is risen again, “who is even at the right hand of God, “who also maketh intercession for us.”

III. His protection of his church against all its enemies spiritual and temporal.—The attempts of the former he defeats by the influence of his spirit to preserve us from sin, and the efficacy of his intercession to procure pardon for us
on

on terms of faith and repentance. With regard to deliverance from temporal enemies, his vindictive power has been most eminently exercised upon the Jewish and Roman nations, the two great opposers and persecutors of the christian religion. Its succeeding adversaries, in every age, have, and no doubt will serve only for a trial of the faith and patience of its true and zealous professors, generally without prevailing to their injury even here, and always subservient to their happiness hereafter: till, at length the appointed time shall come when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the
 “kingdoms of the Lord, and of his
 “Christ;” and having reigned on this earth till its period arrives, he shall resign to God his kingdom of grace, its end being accomplished, reign over his saints in that of glory for ever and ever, and fully perform that invaluable promise, “to him that overcometh will
 “I grant to sit with me in my throne,
 “even

“even as I also overcame, and am set
“down with my Father in his throne.”

THESE things being so, let us learn, from a due consideration of our Saviour's departure into heaven, to prepare for his coming again.—To this was the attention of those who saw it directed by the angels, “ye men of Galilee why stand
“ye gazing up into heaven? this same
“Jesus which is taken up from you into
“heaven, shall so come in like manner
“as ye have seen him go into heaven.” And the scriptures assure us that his second coming shall be to judge the quick and dead, which consideration is a powerful motive that we be careful to conduct ourselves in such a manner as to be prepared to meet our Lord at that great and awful period, and to enter with him into his joy.—He came down upon earth to procure for us a right to future happiness, and to instruct us how to obtain it: he is now ascended into
heaven

on terms of faith and repentance. With regard to deliverance from temporal enemies, his vindictive power has been most eminently exercised upon the Jewish and Roman nations, the two great opposers and persecutors of the christian religion. Its succeeding adversaries, in every age, have, and no doubt will serve only for a trial of the faith and patience of its true and zealous professors, generally without prevailing to their injury even here, and always subservient to their happiness hereafter: till, at length the appointed time shall come when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ;" and having reigned on this earth till its period arrives, he shall resign to God his kingdom of grace, its end being accomplished, reign over his saints in that of glory for ever and ever, and fully perform that invaluable promise, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even

“even as I also overcame, and am set
“down with my Father in his throne.”

THESE things being so, let us learn, from a due consideration of our Saviour's departure into heaven, to prepare for his coming again.—To this was the attention of those who saw it directed by the angels, “ye men of Galilee why stand
“ye gazing up into heaven? this same
“Jesus which is taken up from you into
“heaven, shall so come in like manner
“as ye have seen him go into heaven.” And the scriptures assure us that his second coming shall be to judge the quick and dead, which consideration is a powerful motive that we be careful to conduct ourselves in such a manner as to be prepared to meet our Lord at that great and awful period, and to enter with him into his joy.—He came down upon earth to procure for us a right to future happiness, and to instruct us how to obtain it: he is now ascended into
heaven

heaven to prepare a place for us, and there, seated in glory, invites us to him. What remains, then, but that we fix our hearts where our treasure is, and set our affections on those things that are above, “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God?”—But, in vain do we rejoice in a glorified Saviour unless we become his friends by doing what he commands: in vain do we lift up our eyes and our wishes to his happy abode, unless, by endeavouring to imitate him now in purity and holiness, we qualify ourselves to partake hereafter of the resemblance of his glory.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of
 “the Lord, or who shall stand in his
 “holy place? Even he that leadeth an
 “uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing
 “which is right, and speaketh the truth
 “from his heart.—He that hath used
 “no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil
 “to his neighbour, and hath not slan-
 “dered

‘ dered his neighbour.—He that setteth
 “ not by himself, but is lowly in his
 “ own eyes.—In whose eyes a vile person
 “ is contemned, but he honoureth them
 “ that fear the Lord.—He that hath clean
 “ hands and a pure heart, and hath not
 “ lift up his soul unto vanity.—He shall
 “ receive the blessing from the Lord, and
 “ righteousness from the God of his sal-
 “ vation.”

SERMON

SERMON X.

ON PRAYER.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

LUKE xi. 1. Part of the Verse.

ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID UNTO HIM,
LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.

THE disciple is here entreating our Lord to instruct him in the important duty of prayer, whereby we acknowledge God to be the creator and governor of the world; on whom we absolutely, and in every respect depend; that in all our wants he is ready to hear and able to relieve; and that our requests are founded upon a belief of his infinite goodness, which

which disposes him to grant the petitions of his servants; upon a certainty of his power, whereby he is able to fulfil our reasonable desires; and upon his truth, which renders it impossible that he should not observe the promise he has made of giving to those that ask.—Since prayer, therefore, tends to the praise of God, as well as to the relief of our necessities, I shall consider,

FIRST, the grounds and reasonableness of this duty.

SECONDLY, the qualifications requisite to the Almighty's acceptance of our petitions.

IT has been the opinion of the best and wisest men of all ages, that man was created, as a being, able to understand and set forth the glory of God, in these lower regions.—For, the creation seemed imperfect, and the glory, which
should

should redound to the Father of all things, obscure, whilst there was no creature capable of observing and pointing out the wonderful works of the great artificer of the universe.—Man, therefore, the last best work of God, was formed; and, as all other creatures were made for his use, he himself was set apart for the service and worship of his creator.—To this end he was endowed with the noble faculties of understanding and speech, the one to apprehend, the other to celebrate the divine perfection, and, as the priest of nature, to offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the whole creation.—To shew forth their maker's glory seems to have been the chief business of our first parents while in a state of innocence: for they had no wants to be relieved, no grievances to be redressed; even their desires of future mercies were prevented, and all they had occasion to ask, in that blissful situation, was the countenance of their

Lord.—But when, unhappily, through the wiles of the tempter, they contracted guilt, and entailed misery upon their posterity, supplication and prayer became necessary duties of mankind, and will so continue, whilst we have infirmities to be healed, wants to be relieved, and sins to be pardoned, which will be as long as we abide in this state of mortality.—Our dependence upon God renders it necessary that we should sue to him for what we stand in need of, and give him praise for what we have already obtained.—Our guilt, and our being liable to punishment, prompt us to seek his favour by humble contrition for sin, and earnest desire of pardon.—Our infirmities and temptations shew how absolutely needful the assistance of his grace is, both towards recovering by true repentance, and persevering in doing what he requires. The common ties of humanity, and the religion of charity, oblige us to pray for one another, as well as for ourselves;

selves ; so that the light of nature discovers this duty, and shews it through all the ways of invocation and calling upon God.

IF we look into the heathen world, we shall find no nation so barbarous as not to have had some form of religious worship ; and, that however they might have been ignorant of the right method, the wisest in most nations were of opinion, that the nature of God might justly challenge the worship of man ; their acknowledgments, therefore, were, that all their actions should begin with the Gods ; and that a blessing could not be derived upon them, without imploring their aid ; nay, that the sacrifices were not duly offered, nor the Gods rightly worshipped, without prayer.

IF we consider the matter properly, what can be supposed more reasonable, than that the sovereign Lord of all the

world should be acknowledged by his creatures: that we who continually depend upon, should ever be looking up to, him?—Is it not right that we who every moment experience a thousand instances of his kindness, partake of a thousand mercies and favours at his hands, and who must perish in an instant if not upheld by him, is it not highly reasonable that we should offer up grateful thanks to our bounteous benefactor?—The common forms of civility forbid neglect in testifying respect to princes or superiors, though no particular benefit might have been conferred by them: but, if we were beholden to them for *our daily bread*, to come into their presence without making thankful acknowledgment of their kindness, would be esteemed the extreme of ingratitude.—How much more ungrateful, then, negligently to pass by the Almighty, day after day; nay, continually to be in his presence, and neither pay homage or
reverence

reverence to him, as our supreme Lord, nor return the thanks of a grateful heart to our daily preserver?

Vicious men may, perhaps, have other conceptions; but, as they have no experience of devotion, their judgment must be incompetent: those only who have a due sense of the Almighty impressed upon their minds, and have accustomed themselves to spiritual exercises, can form right notions of him.—To such we appeal, whether the consolation and satisfaction resulting from a pious communication with their Lord and Maker, and heartily pouring out their souls to him, do not far exceed any other delight?—Whether they do not find more peace, joy, and comfort in their attendance upon his service, either in public or private, than in any other pleasures or gratifications?—As much as the soul is more pure and excellent than the body, so much are the pleasures of

the one superior to those of the other; and the greatest enjoyment of which it is capable, is that which it experiences in the exercise of true devotion;—in the high sense it entertains of the favours and mercies vouchsafed to man in the gracious dispensations of providence, and this is expressed in performing the duty of prayer.

THE countenance and protection of princes, and others, in a situation of life, with respect to himself, less elevated, is, by man, esteemed honourable: but, what comparison does their favour bear to that of the “King of Kings?” If they possess power, he is omnipotent.—Their influence is for the limited and uncertain duration of human life, his co-extensive with eternity,—infinite. Shall we not much rather, then, pay homage to the “Lord of Lords,” the great creator, governor, and ruler of the universe, than to any being by him created?—As far

as

as his power, majesty, and glory, transcend theirs, so much is he the more proper object of our veneration and reverence.—If we have received benefits from them, such must have been earthly and temporal: but his gifts are donations of the Lord of heaven and earth, and his ability to confer them eternal.

THE duty of prayer is spoken of by the wisest of men, at the dedication of the temple, towards procuring temporal blessings, and averting sublunary judgments, in the following words: “when
 “thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have
 “sinned against thee, and shall turn
 “again to thee, and confess thy name,
 “and pray and make supplication unto
 “thee, in this house; then hear thou
 “in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy
 “people Israel, and bring them again
 “unto the land which thou gavest unto
 “their fathers.—When heaven is shut

“ up, and there is no rain, because they
 “ have sinned against thee; if they pray
 “ towards this place, and confess thy
 “ name, and turn from their sin, when
 “ thou afflictest them; then hear thou in
 “ heaven, and forgive the sin of thy ser-
 “ vants and of thy people Israel, that
 “ thou teach them the good way wherein
 “ they should walk, and give rain upon
 “ thy land which thou hast given to thy
 “ people for an inheritance.”—If war,
 therefore, infest, recourse is to be had
 to humble supplication to “ the Lord of
 “ hosts,” that he may guard us against
 its direful ravages, and send us the blef-
 sings of peace.—If famine rage, we are
 to petition the God of plenty, that he
 would restore to us genial seasons, and
 “ the kindly fruits of the earth, so as
 “ in due time we may enjoy them.”—

Whatever calamities, whether of a pri-
 vate or public nature, our sins may have
 drawn down upon us, a devout per-
 formance of this duty will remove, and
 secure

secure to us the blessing of our almighty father, both upon our persons and labours, upon our families, and all that belong to us.

To mention other benefits, arising from a conscientious discharge of this duty.—In prayer we set our wants and infirmities constantly before us, solemnly place ourselves in the presence of God, and call upon him who sees all our actions; we enter into resolutions against sin, regulate our thoughts by serious deliberation, abstract them from secular and worldly affairs, and, by frequently conversing with God, gradually approach nearer to his perfection. The exercise of this duty produces in us that temper of mind which is highly conducive to a proper regulation of our actions, to a due knowledge of our dependency upon, and reverential fear of our great father and protector.

SOME

SOME men will say, perhaps, that, if God be all-wise, he knows of what we stand in need, without being made acquainted by us with our infirmities and calamities: if he be infinitely good and kind, more ready to give than we to ask, importunate petitions become unnecessary and improper.—To this we answer, that though the knowledge of God be infinite, and such as to render it an impossibility that he should be ignorant of our wants and distresses, it is but just and reasonable, that we, who are entirely dependent upon his favour and protection, should acknowledge his power and our own weakness.—In like manner though the goodness of God be infinite, so that we can set no bounds to it, it may be truly said to be limited by his own wisdom and justice. Should he constantly bestow upon us unsolicited benefits, we might become remiss in that dutiful acknowledgment which we undoubtedly owe to him; and, unmindful
of

of his mercies, might impute to chance, or the natural course of things, that which is most certainly due to his beneficent providence alone. His kind concessions are the rewards of our sincere and fervent petitions: by these we learn from whose hand "every good and perfect gift" cometh: and by these we are convinced how much it concerns us to use the means of prayer in obtaining his sanction and support.

FURTHER; he will not suffer another to take away his glory.—Now, although frail and weak mortals as we are, strictly speaking, cannot add to the honour of "the King of glory," yet he will not permit that homage, which is due to his prerogative alone, to be ascribed to another.—The atheist might then, with impunity, represent the stupendous works of the great creator of the universe as the mere effect of chance and accident.—We are, therefore, by gratitude, reason,
justice,

justice, and piety bound to pay reverence and adoration to the almighty maker and preserver of all things. Our prayers for future blessings, and our thanksgivings for benefits already received are to be offered up with devout sincerity at the throne of grace: and our contrition and repentance for past sins and wickedness, accompanied with faithful promises and resolutions of amendment, are to be expressed when we prostrate ourselves before the God of mercies, “who desireth
 “not the death of a sinner, but rather
 “that he may turn from his wickedness
 “and live.”

SUCH are the grounds and reasonableness of the duty of prayer: the next consideration is, those qualifications with which we are to be prepared, in order to the Almighty's acceptance of our petitions; which I shall defer to a future occasion.—In the mean time permit me to request that you seriously revolve in
 your

your minds the importance of that great duty, concerning which I have endeavoured to treat in the foregoing discourse.

THAT we may all attain to a right understanding of, and “steadfastly purpose to” fulfil our duty in the exercise of that holy office, God, of his infinite mercy and goodness, grant, through the merits and mediation of his most blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

SERMON

your minds the importance of that great

day, concerning which I have already

vowed to speak in the foregoing disc-

course.

And now, friends, I would

that we may all unite to a right

understanding of, and a hearty

support to, that our duty in the exercise

of that holy office, God of his minister

mercy and goodness, grant through the

merits and mediation of his most beloved

son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

And now, friends, I would

that we may all unite to a right

understanding of, and a hearty

support to, that our duty in the exercise

of that holy office, God of his minister

mercy and goodness, grant through the

merits and mediation of his most beloved

son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

And now, friends, I would

that we may all unite to a right

understanding of, and a hearty

support to, that our duty in the exercise

of that holy office, God of his minister

mercy and goodness, grant through the

merits and mediation of his most beloved

son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

SERMON XI.

ON PRAYER.

PART II.

LUKE xi. 1. Part of the Verse.

ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID UNTO HIM,
LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.

IT is an evident principle of natural religion, that an inward and true sense of piety is absolutely requisite, as a recommendation of our prayers to the Almighty.—The gospel, also, informs us that “God heareth not sinners; but if
“any man be a worshipper of him, and
“doeth his will, him he heareth.”—The apostle, likewise, assures us that “if our
“heart

“ heart condemn us not, then have we
 “ confidence towards God :” not only a
 general confidence in his favour, and the
 good dispositions of his providence, but
 in his particular kindness towards us,
 when, in humble supplication, we ad-
 dress ourselves to him ; for so it follows
 in the next words, “ whatsoever we ask,
 “ we receive of him, because we keep
 “ his commandments, and do those things
 “ that are pleasing in his sight.”——
 Purity of intention in our petitions to
 our heavenly father is, moreover, thus
 alluded to by the apostle as essential,
 “ ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask
 “ amiss, that ye may consume it upon
 “ your lusts.”

IF, therefore, we desire that our pray-
 ers and addresses should enter heaven, and
 find admittance at the throne of grace,
 we must be careful that no irregular
 or sinful desire be the subject of our
 request.

THE

THE frame and temper of mind, with which we address ourselves to the giver of all good gifts, must be such as is not displeasing to his spotless purity; the end, for which we pray, must be such as he approves; and the manner, with which we presume to importune him, such as he directs: viz. with firm trust, serious attention, fervent desire, humility, and perseverance in the performance of this great duty. The trust, wherewith we present our supplications, must be suitable to the sure promises of God on which it is to be founded; our attention must be influenced by the importance of that religious office in which we are engaged; our fervency must answer the magnitude of those wants under which we labour; our humility must bear proportion to the glory and majesty of that great Being to whom we look up; and our perseverance to the inestimable value of those blessings which we promise to ourselves at his hands.

THE majesty of God, indeed, upon first consideration, is more likely to strike us with awe and terror, than with hope and confidence.—If we take a view of our own unworthiness and his glory, of our own sinfulness and his purity, and at the same time reflect upon the immense distance between him and his creatures, it may appear sufficiently presumptuous merely to address him, without the further hope and expectation of being heard and relieved.—We may say with the psalmist, “ what is man, “ that thou art mindful of him? and “ the son of man, that thou visitest “ him?”——Yet, when we consider that our approach towards him is in obedience to his commands, that our hopes are built upon his sure mercies, that our confidence is supported by his express promises, we cannot withdraw ourselves from his presence without violating his authority, we cannot despair of acceptance without reproaching his goodness,

we

we cannot doubt of success without distrust-
 trusting his word.—Whatever argu-
 ments, therefore, may be offered to
 weaken our faith, to stagger our hopes,
 or to shake our confidence, are all an-
 swered by this gracious promise of our
 Redeemer, “ I say unto you, what things
 “ soever ye desire when ye pray, believe
 “ that ye receive them, and ye shall
 “ have them :” for, be the object of our
 petitions ever so important, it is not out
 of the compass of his almighty power ;
 be it ever so disproportionate to our
 deserts, it cannot surpass the bounds of
 his merits.

DUE attention of mind is another
 requisite qualification towards rendering
 our prayers acceptable.—If we consider
 the frame of our minds, we shall there
 find a certain train of thoughts con-
 stantly flowing, each following the other
 in rapid succession, and when we are
 most anxious to fix our attention on

one particular point, we find it difficult to settle that which is in its own nature so volatile and unsteady. God, therefore, who expects that we should serve in proportion only to the strength of the faculties wherewith he has endued us, will, no doubt, graciously pardon unavoidable errors.—But, though his mercy will certainly exonerate us from the imputation of guilt arising from the infirmities of our nature; yet, it will in no case acquit us in respect of those deviations from rectitude which are the voluntary consequences of our own depravity.—As when, through the power of our lusts, or the inordinate cares of the world, our minds are so totally engaged with things sensual and earthly, that we cannot call them off to spiritual and religious duties.—When we set our thoughts adrift, as it were, and suffer them to wander at random, and without controul.—When, likewise, before we enter upon this solemn duty, we do not
duly

duly prepare ourselves for it, neglecting to impress upon our minds awful notions of the transcending^{ent} majesty of that Supreme Being whom we approach: nor, during our religious exercise, preserve a lively sense of the exceeding glory of the great God before whom we stand.—When, in short, the words which we pour forth are vain empty sounds, unaccompanied with inward thoughts answerable to them. Such wandering and distracted prayers are so far from being a “reasonable service,” which alone is acceptable unto God, that the royal preacher calls them “the sacrifice of fools,” with these admonitions, “keep thy foot,” i. e. thy thoughts and affections, “when thou goest to the house of God.—Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.” And here permit me to recommend this duty of caution and attention to all, but particularly

to the younger of my hearers, whose thoughts are too apt to be diverted from the great duty in which they ought to be engaged, yet at the same time seem to join in the service, and thereby offer "the sacrifice of fools."

THE next qualification, in presenting our petitions, is fervency.—The apostle in telling us that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," does not only suppose intense devotion in prayer to be a duty, but a mean likewise to recommend it more strongly to the favour and acceptance of God. Real want, when sensibly felt, will find a way of expressing itself in such a manner as to excite pity: if, therefore, we are truly conscious of our necessities, of our own utter inability to provide for them, and our consequent dependence upon God, who alone can supply them, the deep sense that we have occasion for his condescending aid, will render us
anxious

anxious and fervent when we petition him for relief.—“As the hart panteth “after the water-brooks,” so David’s soul panted after God.—His “soul thirsted “for God, his flesh longed for him in “a dry and thirsty land where no water “was.—His soul longed, yea, even faint-
 “ed for the courts of the Lord.” The panting of a hart wearied, pursued, and spent; the drought of a parched and gaping land; the cravings of hunger and thirst are proper and lively images of an eager and affectionate concern for those blessings which the holy psalmist so earnestly described.—This is the life and true spirit of devotion.

ANOTHER property, necessary to render our prayers successful, is humility.—This arises from the nature of the duty itself: for, since by prayer we acknowledge ourselves to be indigent creatures, standing in need of the assistance of a superior power, pride must be incompatible

patible with this situation. The access, which we have to the throne of grace, is the effect of condescending mercy on the part of our almighty Creator: we have no claim to his favour from any thing like merit on our side: his goodwill, towards a reconciliation with offending sinners, is the consequence of his disposition to pardon, through the mediation of his Son, our Saviour, who, by his own blood, purchased redemption for us. We are, indeed, to exert our utmost endeavours to render ourselves proper objects of forgiveness; but, when we have done all that human frailty can effect, we still continue miserable creatures, unless the arm of mercy is stretched out to our assistance. This being the case, with what humility, reverence, and adoration ought we to prostrate ourselves before our gracious Lord and Judge?

ONE condition more, towards the acceptance of our petitions, is persevering patience.—

patience.—For, though God, for the trial of our faith, and proof of our humility, for the manifestation of our trust in him, and of our submission to his holy will, for the demonstration of our entire dependence upon his goodness and bounty, may think proper sometimes to delay granting the object of our request, yet, we are not, on that account, to despair of the acceptance of our renewed addresses.—Of the good effect of these we have many examples in scripture.

It remains only for me to point out, that, those things, for which we pray, must be such as will meet the approbation of our almighty Father, before we can expect him to grant our petitions.—This the apostle hath thus laid down, “this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:” and, most certainly, if we do not ask according to his will, he will not hear us. It may be asked, what things are agreeable

agreeable to his good favour, and what are not? Whatsoever is not just, most assuredly must be contrary to the approbation of a Being perfectly pure. Several things may be proper in themselves, yet very unjust in us to ask for them. For instance, health and prosperity are justly desirable; yet, when we supplicate these, or any other good, with a view to employ them not in the glory of God, but as the mean of indulging vanity and vice, he will reject our petitions.

THE matter of our prayer may be lawful in itself, we may make our supplication with an upright intention, yet, the Almighty, who knows all things, may not esteem it convenient for us.— This may be the case in any of those things which we call worldly blessings. We are ignorant whether they will tend to our advantage or otherwise; we know not, therefore, whether they are or are not agreeable to the will of God; and,
con-

consequently, cannot, with assured success, offer petitions for them. Our supplications, then, must always be made with submission to the divine will. Our great Exemplar has shewn us a powerful and lively lesson of this: three times, in his agony, he entreated his Father, in the most earnest manner, that that cup might pass from him, (viz. the ignominious death which was then approaching) “nevertheless,” says he, “not my will “but thine be done.” The conclusion, therefore, is, we must not pray for things unlawful, neither must we pray for lawful things with design to put them to an ill use, to “make provision” with them “for the flesh to fulfil the “lusts thereof.”—We must not invoke the Almighty unless with the absolute resignation of ourselves and our wills to his direction.—We supplicate him to give us all good things, and to keep us from all evil things; but, as to what things are good or evil for us must be left to his wisdom to determine.

FINALLY.—

FINALLY.—When we presume to address ourselves to the throne of grace, whether in public or private, it must be with that zeal and fervency, mingled with a due firmness, and steadfastness of mind, suited to the performance of so solemn a duty: equally remote from the listlessness of indifference, and the violence of enthusiasm. The great Being, before whom we stand, knoweth the most hidden secrets of the heart, and requireth reasonable service. Our supplications are to be presented to him as the meek petitions of creatures subject to his will, relying upon his mercy, with firm faith in his promises, conscious of their own unworthiness. That indulgence which we expect from him, we must, as far as is within our power, exercise towards others; charity must be predominant in our hearts and actions, For what man can reasonably expect that his iniquity will be pardoned, by the great Lord of the universe, whilst he himself continues remorseless to the
transf-

transgressions of his fellow creatures? We are taught by our blessed Lord to pray that our trespasses may be forgiven, "as we forgive them that trespass against us."—With hearts thus prepared we may venture to approach the throne of grace, in confidence that the God of mercies will grant what is conducive to our welfare and happiness: and, that our minds may be thus duly prepared, let us thus entreat him, "O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant, that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I.

MATT. vi. 9. latter Part of the Verse.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HAL-
LOWED BE THY NAME.

PRAYER is essentially requisite to true religion.—Such are its effects, through grace, that whoever seriously, devoutly, and daily continues the practice of it, will shake off the dominion of sin, and improve in all virtue. This will appear more clearly by duly attending to that prayer which Christ himself hath taught us, which is very expressive and
com-

comprehensive. It opens, most properly, with this invocation, "Our Father which art in heaven." As the whole world received being from God, he is justly styled the Father of all.—And, as reasonable creatures are made in his image and likeness, he is, in a stricter sense, the Father of them.—Angels and men, therefore, are called in scripture, what the creatures below them never are, "the sons" and the "offspring" of God: and in which the prophet saith, "O Lord, thou art our Father, and we all are the work of thy hand." As our creator, he is not only our Father, but also our sovereign Lord.—Moreover, God has a second title to this name, from that fatherly providence and goodness, which he exercises every where continually, and which mankind largely experience, not only in the many enjoyments and comforts he affords them, but even in the afflictions with which he visits them, always for their good, dealing with them
as

as with children whom he loveth, “for
 “whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth.”
 But there is a third reason why we call
 him our Father, peculiar to us Chris-
 tians, founded on our union with his
 Son, our Head, having, when we had
 lost our title, been “begotten again,”
 through his gospel, “unto a lively hope,
 “to an inheritance, reserved in heaven
 “for us.”—Privileges so inestimable,
 that, though he be doubtless a Father,
 and a tender one, to the whole world,
 yet, this word speaks of Christians as
 the persons approaching more nearly, in
 comparison, to his regard, under that
 relative situation.—“As many as re-
 “ceived him,” i. e. our blessed Saviour,
 “to them gave he power to become the
 “sons of God, even to them that be-
 “lieve on his name.” The Lord is good
 to all, but singularly so to those, who,
 by the influence of the christian cove-
 nant, become fit objects of his favour,
 by returning to him with sincere love
 N and

and obedience, and studying “to serve
 “him truly all the days of their lives.”
 They have promises of the greatest blessings, namely, of pardon to their sins on faith and repentance, of the assistance of his holy Spirit, and of life eternal; by which last they are made, in the happiest sense, the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Let us learn, then, as often as we say, “Our Father,” to magnify in our souls that gracious Redeemer, by whose mediation he hath become more particularly so to us than to others. Let us often repeat the thankful reflection of St. John: “behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”—And let us joyfully say with St. Paul; “if children, then heirs; heirs of God, “and joint heirs with Christ.”

Thus, then, the words, “Our Father,” convey important instruction, and express
 our

our acknowledgment of the absolute authority, unspeakable goodness, and mercy of God.—The next words, “which art “in heaven,” set forth and declare his glory and power.

By the infinity of God's nature, he is present every where, from no part of space can he be excluded: his providence is universal in its action, and, wherever he acts, he is: Solomon, therefore, justly declares “the heaven, and heaven of “heavens cannot contain thee.”—Still, the scripture represents him as manifesting the more visible tokens of his inexpressible majesty in one peculiar place, where he receives the homage of his holy angels, who bow before his throne, and issues forth his commands for the government of the whole world. Here our blessed Saviour, when he was received up into heaven, “sat down,” as the scripture expresses, “on the right “hand of God:” and he exhorts his

disciples to look up to the glorious "mansions he had prepared for them in "his Father's house," to raise their views to these higher habitations of inconceivable happiness, to which they should hereafter be admitted, and on which they were, in the mean time, to rest their hearts, as the seat of all bliss.

FURTHER.—Being in heaven denotes the almighty power of God, agreeably to the psalmist, "our God is in heaven, "he hath done whatsoever pleased him." A higher station gives superior power and command; accordingly, by usage in language, to be exalted signifies increase of dominion; on the contrary, to be brought low, diminution: the circumstance, therefore, of God being represented as placed above all, denotes that his kingdom ruleth over all.

WHEN, therefore, we call upon "our "Father which is in heaven," we make
public

public profession of our belief that God is the author and preserver of the universe, who governs all things with a fatherly care, but extends his favour, by extraordinary beneficence, to those, who, by obeying him, shew themselves to be his true children: and, consequently, in a most especial manner to such, as having obtained, through the merits and grace of his Son, the nearest relation and resemblance to him, have thereby a covenant-right, and right of promise, flowing from free grace, an eternal inheritance in that blessed place, where he, in a more peculiar manner, displays his glory, and reigns possessed of sovereign authority, and boundless power.

Now, thus to apply to God, under the notion of our Father, is excellently fitted to instruct and remind us of the dutiful regard we ought to pay him, as he himself argues, “if I be a Father, “where is mine honour?” and, likewise,

of the kindness which we may assuredly expect at his merciful hands, according to the words of our Saviour, “if ye, “being evil, know how to give good “gifts unto your children, how much “more shall your Father, which is in “heaven, give good things to them that “ask him?”—Nor is this expression less fitted to admonish us to imitate, as far as we are able, that goodness which we adore, by the exercise of mercy and loving kindness towards our fellow creatures.

AGAIN; the consideration that our Father is in heaven, possessed of infinite power and glory, should tend to inspire us with reverence towards him, at all times, and in all places; but, more particularly so when we present ourselves to him in devout petition: to this end the wise king instructs us to “keep our “foot when we go to the house of God: “not to be rash with our mouth, nor
“let

“let our heart be hasty to utter any
 “thing before God: for God is in hea-
 “ven; and we upon earth.”—It also
 reminds us what should be the great
 object of our prayers and our lives:
 viz. to obtain admittance to that blessed
 place where God is, and where Christ
 sits at his right hand; for, “in his pre-
 “sence is the fulness of joy, and at
 “his right hand there is pleasure for
 “evermore.”

You see, then, what important truths
 and admonitions these few words, with
 which the prayer dictated by our Lord
 opens, include: every thing, indeed,
 which encourages us, or disposes us, as
 we ought, to pray.

THE petition which immediately fol-
 lows, “Hallowed be thy name,” is per-
 haps more liable to be repeated, without
 being properly understood, than any of
 the rest: but when understood, as it
 easily

easily may be, appears highly proper to stand in the first part of a christian's prayer. The name of God, here, means God himself; as it doth in many other places of scripture, where fearing, or blessing, or calling upon the name of the Lord is mentioned.—And, to hallow his name signifies to think on him, and to behave towards him as an holy Being. The term holy implies that which is clean and pure; and the most estimable purity being that of a mind untainted with sin, and secure from tendency towards it, holiness more especially denotes this, which may in various degrees be ascribed to men and angels, but in absolute perfection to none but God: for, he, and he alone, is infinitely removed from all possibility of doing, thinking, or approving what is evil.

THIS, then, is the sense in which we are to acknowledge that “holy and reverend is his name.” Impressed with this

this conception of him we are to hallow it, and “sanctify the Lord God in our hearts;”—a matter of unspeakable importance, and the very foundation of true religion.—For, if we are not fully persuaded that He is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” with indifference:—if we imagine that He can ever act unrighteously himself, or countenance others in so doing; that He is, in any case, the author of sin; or approves any thing in his creatures but uprightness and goodness; or shews himself other than a Being perfectly great, wise, just, and gracious:—we mistake his nature, and dishonour him; we set up an idol of our own fancy, instead of the true God; in consequence of which, in proportion as our notions of him are false, our worship, imitation, and obedience will be erroneous also; our piety and our morals will both be corrupt; we shall neglect what alone can recommend us to him; we shall hope to please him
by

by performances of no value, perhaps by wicked deeds; and the light that is in us will become darkness.

No wonder, then, that we are directed to make it our first petition, that we and all men may, as we ought, hallow God's name; that so a right sense of him may prevail throughout the world, such as may banish both profaneness and superstition, and engage us all to fear and love him equally:—that we may entertain such notions of christianity as may promote Christ's honour: and allow ourselves in nothing that may bring disgrace on our holy profession, or tempt any to blaspheme, instead of sanctifying, that worthy name by which we are called: but, that each of us may, in our stations, with all diligence and prudence, promote and propagate the belief of “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father.”——This is the way, and the only way, in which we
can,

can, as we ought, hallow and honour God's holy name.

WITH this petition, therefore, our Lord, most rationally, directs us to begin: and, let us remember, that what he directs us to pray for, he expects we should use our sincere endeavours to obtain, and, by our own conduct, promote, that, as we acknowledge that "he which hath called is holy, so should we be holy in all manner of conversation."

THUS have I endeavoured to open to you the extent of the words of the text.—I shall only observe further, that, as we are admitted to the inexpressible privilege of addressing God as "Our Father," we should have a lively and lasting sense of the important truths contained in these few words, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;" and, let us not deceive ourselves by thinking it enough to worship

worship our heavenly Father with our lips, whilst our hearts are far from him; but, fulfil our duty, by “casting away
“the works of darkness, and putting
“upon us the armour of light.”—Let us “shew forth his praise in our lives,
“by giving up ourselves to his service,
“and by walking before him in holiness
“and righteousness all our days, through
“Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with
“the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all
“honour and glory, world without end.
“Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PART II.

MATT. vi. 10.

THY KINGDOM COME—THY WILL BE DONE
IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

THE second petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come," follows very naturally after the first, "Hallowed be thy name:" for, hallowing the name of God; i. e. entertaining just notions, and being possessed of a deep sense of the holiness of his nature, of his abhorrence of all sin, of his justice, and of his goodness; is the natural preparation

preparation for submitting to, and being faithful subjects of that kingdom, for the coming of which we are directed to pray. God, indeed, is, ever was, and cannot but be Lord and King of the whole world, possessed of right and dominion over all things, as the plainest reason shews, and the conclusion of this prayer, in conformity to the rest of scripture, acknowledges. In this sense, therefore, we cannot pray for his kingdom to come at some after time, but rejoice that it is already present; since we live under the government of infinite mercy, wisdom, and power. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.”

BESIDES this natural kingdom of God there is a moral and spiritual one, founded on the willing obedience of reasonable creatures to those laws of righteousness which he hath given them. That this kingdom is not come amongst
men

men so fully as it ought we have but too plain evidence. The very first of human race revolted from their Maker; and their descendants, as scripture, and other histories shew, grew, age after age, more and more disobedient; till, at length, the inhabitants of the whole earth, instead of being the happy subjects of God's rightful kingdom, became, by impious lives, and idolatrous worship, most wretched slaves to the usurped dominion of the wicked one. But, the goodness and wisdom of God made immediate provision to oppose this kingdom of darkness; not by his absolute power, which nothing can resist, for obedience loses its value when it proceeds not from choice; but the actions of reasonable creatures are governed, and the influence of Satan opposed, by instructions, promises, and warnings from heaven.

THESE instructions God gave at first through the patriarchs to all men: and,
 whoever

whoever acknowledged his authority, and obeyed his laws, was a good subject, and true member of his kingdom.—But when, notwithstanding this care, the corruption of mankind became very extensive, he distinguished the posterity of his servant Abraham by special favour; not as casting off the rest of his creatures, for “in every nation, they that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted with him;” but, that in this people at least the profession of faith in him, and subjection to him, might be kept alive; not merely for their own benefit, but for the information and instruction of others also.—With the posterity of Abraham, therefore, was the kingdom of God, in a peculiar degree, for the space of fifteen hundred years. And, whilst they flourished in their own land, they held forth the light of truth to all the nations round them. When they were led captive, or dispersed into other lands, they carried the knowledge
of

of the true God with them, and spread it yet further, and thus were great instruments in preparing the rest of mankind for that general re-establishment of obedience to God, as King and Lord of all, which our blessed Saviour came to effect.

THE Gospel dispensation, therefore, having this for its end, viz. to bring men back to the obedience of God, and being much more perfectly fitted to effect this purpose, than any preceding religious institution had been, the scripture, in a distinguished manner, calls it "the Gospel of the kingdom of God," which words signify that "dominion," which is foretold in Daniel, "which should not be destroyed."—Our Saviour gave notice of its approach, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." By his death he hath erected this kingdom upon the ruins of Satan's usurpation, over whom he triumphed on the

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cross.

cross. But, still, the kingdom of God is by no means come, in that extent, which we have reason to beg that it may, and to believe that, in time, it will. The greatest part of mankind has not, even in profession, entered into this kingdom; but lies overwhelmed in Pagan idolatry, Jewish unbelief, or Mahometan delusion. The greater part of Christians have corrupted the doctrine of Christ with grievous errors: and those who preserve the pure faith, yet, too generally, lead such impious and wicked lives, that, though the kingdom of God has taken place among them in outward appearance, and they profess to be followers of our blessed Lord, nevertheless, in that sense, which will prove the most important, they are still far from him:—for the kingdom of God consists, as the apostle explains it, in “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.”

HERE,

HERE, then, is great need for praying that "the heathen" may become the "inheritance" of Christ, "and the "uttermost parts of the" Mahometan world his "possession."—That the Jews, from whom for their unbelief the kingdom of God hath been so long taken away, may be restored, as the prophets have foretold they shall be, to a share in it.—And, lastly, "that all who profess and call themselves Christians may" not only "be led into the way of truth," but "hold the faith in unity of spirit, "in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." How little prospect soever there may at present be of such happiness, yet, we have a sure word of prophecy for the ground of our prayers, that the time will come when "the "kingdoms of this world shall become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his "Christ," in a degree and manner they have never yet been, when "all the

“ people shall know the Lord, from the
 “ least to the greatest.”

BUT, the kingdom of God upon earth is, comparatively, but of short duration and imperfect; and, indeed, only the introduction to that glorious and eternal kingdom in heaven, which should always be the object of our most ardent desires and requests. For, as the governor and the governed, and all the great fundamental laws of government are still to be the same in the present state of trial, and the future one of recompense, they all make up together but one kingdom of God, though in very different states and degrees: therefore, when we pray for the coming of it, we pray, in the end, for the arrival of that time when the King and Judge of all shall sit upon the throne of his glory, “ and reward every man according
 “ to his works; when the righteous shall
 “ shine

“ shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” even “ that kingdom which was prepared for them “ from the foundation of the world,” and shall reign with him in it for ever and ever.

As we pray, then, for this time, it is evident we ought also to prepare for it, otherwise we only solicit our own condemnation, as the prophet Amos most awfully warns us, “ wo unto you that” (without preparing for it) “ desire the “ day of the Lord: to what end is it “ for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light.” That we might not be ignorant, therefore, on what it is that our share in the kingdom of God depends, our Saviour, immediately after the petition in his prayer for its coming, subjoins another which teaches and expresses it very clearly, “ Thy will “ be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” For, “ not every one that saith unto him,

“Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they” only “that do the will of his Father which is in heaven.” What God, indeed, wills to do, that “he” himself “doeth” accordingly, both “in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand.” But whatever he wills us to do, that he requires of us as we value his favour, or fear his displeasure.—Yet, to obey as we ought, we are not able without the assistance of his grace: but, since by means of prayer we may obtain this assistance, we are, certainly, with as much justice expected to obey his will, as if the power was already in ourselves.

It is the will of God that we suffer with content what he lays upon us, and perform faithfully what he commands us. The former of these consists in bearing patiently whatever God sees proper to inflict upon us; and, though we may wish

wish for the prevention or removal of any suffering, yet, to be satisfied, nay desirous that his will, and not ours, may be done, however difficult this may prove to us, is an evident and necessary duty. To indulge a contrary disposition is to torment ourselves, and to displease our Maker, by rebelling against his authority, denying his wisdom, and distrusting his goodness. That we may be able, therefore, to submit meekly to his good pleasure, is, undoubtedly, one great quality for which we are to pray, both in duty to him, and for our own comfort. Still, as the blessed inhabitants of heaven have, we may reasonably suppose, little or no occasion for this kind of obedience in patiently enduring afflictions, we may presume to think that the latter duty, viz. the faithful performance of what he commands, is the point which our Saviour designed we should principally have in view, when we beg that God's will may be done by us on earth, as it is in

heaven by the Angels, those “ministers
 “of his, that, hearkening unto the voice
 “of his word,” fulfil “his command-
 “ments, and do his pleasure.”——Not
 that we can expect in this life to equal
 the services of beings placed so much
 above us: but only aspire to such a re-
 semblance of them, that our obedience
 may bear the same proportion to the
 abilities which God hath given us, as
 that of the heavenly spirits doth to the
 powers with which he hath endowed
 them.—They, without exception, fulfil
 what they know to be his pleasure.—
 Whereas we “leave undone those things
 “which we ought to have done, and do
 “those things which we ought not to
 “have done.”—They do his will with
 alacrity and cheerfulness; we, too fre-
 quently, shew great disinclination and
 reluctance.—They do it from a principle
 of duty; many of our good actions, and
 upon which we value ourselves, I fear
 proceed from no true principle; but,
 some

some from constitution, some from worldly prudence, and some from vanity and ostentation. In these respects we must earnestly pray, and diligently endeavour to be like them, thus shall we ourselves as far as human frailty is able, fulfil that duty, for which we are in the latter part of the text directed to pray, and set a good example to others, whereby both they and we, after having performed the will of God on earth, shall be admitted to his presence in heaven, there to enjoy the reward prepared for them that love him, and do his commandments.

SERMON

some from confusion, some from world-
 ly prudence, and some from vanity and
 ostentation. In these respects we must
 carefully pray, and diligently endeavour
 to be like them, that shall we ourselves
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 that duty for which we are in the latter
 part of the text directed to pray, and be
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 they and we, after having performed the
 will of God on earth, shall be admitted
 to his presence in heaven, there to enjoy
 the reward prepared for them that love
 him, and do his commandments.

SERMON XIV.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PART III.

MATT. vi. 11, 12.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD—
AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE
FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

THE three former of the six petitions of the Lord's prayer express our earnest desire, that we, and all our fellow creatures, may attain the great end of our creation, i. e. understand, embrace, and practise true religion, to the honour of God, and our own eternal happiness.—After which we proceed, in the three last, to ask of him the means

means to this end; such supplies of our wants as will be needful for the performance of our duty: and they are comprehended under three heads more: the relief of our temporal necessities; the forgiveness of our past sins; and the assistance of his grace, against future temptations.

THE first of these blessings we request by saying, "Give us this day our daily bread."—All the good things of life, and our capacity of receiving support and comfort from them, proceed, as every thing doth, from God's free gift: and, therefore, depend, as every thing doth, on his free pleasure: for, what he hath bestowed, he can with the same ease, at any time, take away.—He hath, indeed, placed things in a regular, and, what we call, a natural course and order. But, this order is not only of his own appointing, but of his own preserving too. He it is that "maketh his sun to rise,"

“rise,” that “giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” Were he only thus kind to us all in general, it would certainly be our duty to acknowledge his goodness, and to pray for the continuance of it. But, as we further learn from scripture, that his providence extends, even in the most minute instance, to each of us in particular, and that not the smallest thing comes to pass, but by his appointment, or wise permission, these are additional reasons for applying to him, that his continual watchful care may be ever exercised towards us for our good. We know not, indeed, for certainty, what will conduce to our advantage: still, since he has implanted in our frame and nature a desire of enjoying the life he has given us, to its ordinary term, with a competent share of the several accommodations which contribute to render it agreeable, it must be lawful to express those desires
to

to him in a proper manner, and this our Saviour directs us to do when he instructs us to petition for our daily bread. The word bread, as it frequently imports in scripture all kinds of food, so may it naturally signify, what it does in this prayer, all sorts of things requisite to human life.—This Agur meant, when he prayed that God would “feed him with food” (in the original it is bread) “convenient for him;” and this we mean, in common discourse, when we speak of persons getting their bread. But we are by no means to extend our petitions beyond things requisite and necessary, beyond those without which we are unable to subsist conveniently and comfortably.—Not that desires of further advantage in the world are absolutely unlawful, but are too apt to enlarge and swell into extravagant and sinful passions, into schemes of vanity, luxury, or covetousness, that we have usually more need to check and restrain, than

than to encourage, by requesting the accomplishment of them from God, lest we be guilty of what St. James condemns, viz. "asking amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts."

It is, therefore, for such a share of worldly good, as to a reasonable and moderate mind will appear sufficient, that our Saviour allows us to pray, in the spirit which Agur expresses, "give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Though the temptations under extreme poverty are pressing, yet the tendency of wealth, ease, and power, to create sensuality, pride, and forgetfulness of God, is so exceeding great, that a mind, well instructed and moderate, would rather submit, than be placed

placed in dangerous pre-eminence. For the preservation of order, and conduct of the affairs of society, some must fill exalted stations: but, let all who do, look well to their ways, and let none of their inferiors envy.

It should be here further observed, that our blessed Lord hath not only confined us to pray for our bread, but for our daily bread, intimating, no doubt, that we should remember and acknowledge that our dependence upon God is continual, from one moment to another: that they, who have the most of this world, have it only during his pleasure, and are bound both to ask and receive every day's enjoyment of it as a new gift from him: while, at the same time, they, who have least, may be assured, that, what he hath commanded them to pray for, he will ordinarily not fail to bestow, by blessing their endeavours, if
they

they are able to use endeavours, or, by stirring up the charity of others towards them, if they are not.

INDUSTRY is the mean, by which the Almighty hath thought fit to decree that most of his creatures shall obtain their bread: by this, therefore, they are to seek it, they have no title to it upon any other ground; "if any will not work, neither shall he eat," saith St. Paul. They must not only labour to supply present necessities; but, by diligence and frugality, lay up, if possible, for future exigencies, learning of the ant, which "provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

APPLYING to God, by prayer, for daily bread, is far from precluding the propriety of our own diligent attention to the appointed means of obtaining it. But, if this attention grow into presumptuous anxiety, void of regard to

the superintending providence of the Disposer of all things, we provoke him to blast our fairest hopes:—if it be distrustful, we think unjustly of him, to whom we address our petitions, who can as easily supply the bread of to-morrow, as he gave that of yesterday. If the cares of this world so engross our thoughts as to render us unmindful of the next, or that we vainly imagine ourselves more secure in stores laid up for many years, than in God's good providence, we suffer ourselves to be led in contradiction both to the spirit of our Lord's prayer, and of his whole religion, which commands that "we seek
 "first the kingdom of God, and his
 "righteousness," and "trust not in un-
 "certain riches, but in Him who giveth
 "us richly all things to enjoy."

MOREOVER; we are not to gain subsistence by fraud, theft, or any other unlawful means. And, since we do not
 say,

say, give *me my* daily bread, but, give *us ours*, we entreat God to supply the wants of others, as well as of ourselves. Now, the means, which he hath provided for relieving the necessities of the helpless poor, are charitable donations; to pray that they may be supplied, and withhold from them what he hath designed for their benefit, is that hypocrisy which St. James thus exposes, “if a
 “brother or sister be naked, and desti-
 “tute of daily food, and one of you say
 “unto them, Depart in peace, be you
 “warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye
 “give them not those things which are
 “needful to the body; what doth it
 “profit?”

FROM our temporal wants, we proceed next to a much more important concern, our spiritual ones. We ask, in the first place, that which seems, indeed, highly necessary, pardon and mercy:
 “forgive us our debts, as we forgive

“our debtors.”—Now, waving the consideration that faith and repentance are necessary to the forgiveness of sins, I shall, here, only advert to the condition mentioned, upon which we are to expect remission of our offences, viz. that we also forgive, as we hope to be forgiven.—Concerning this, two points are to be considered: what that forgiveness is, to which we are bound; and how far the exercise of it will avail us.

THE obligation to forgiveness does not intend that the magistrate should omit the punishment of malefactors, “for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”—Nor, that the rulers of the church forbear spiritual censures, intended for the amendment of sinners, and protection of the innocent, when they are likely to have these good effects. Nor, that private persons do amiss in bringing transgressors to justice, the neglect

neglect of which, in general, would greatly tend to the injury of society at large.—Nor, are we forbidden to make reasonable demand on such as withhold our due, or do us wrong; for, great is the difference between recovering a debt in a lawful way, and revenging an injury.—Nor, lastly, are we bound to entertain as favourable an opinion of those who have committed injury against us, as we did before, which may be impossible; or, to put as much confidence in, and shew as much favour towards them, which may be unwise.—But, our obligation to forgive does mean, and absolutely require, that civil governors be moderate and merciful; and that ecclesiastical ones use discipline to edification, and not to destruction.—That, in our private capacity, we pass by all offences, which, with safety to ourselves and the public, we can: and, where we must defend, or recover our right, we be ready to embrace peaceable and friendly accommodation,

modation, before we proceed to extremities, which become necessary when all other means fail.—That we never be guilty of injustice to others, because they have been guilty of it to us ; and never refuse them proper favours, because we have been refused the same by them.—That we look upon little provocations as trifles ; and be careful not to consider great ones of more importance than they really are.—That we always wish well to those who may have acted on the contrary towards us ; and be ready, as soon as we have real cause, to entertain a favourable opinion of them ; to believe their repentance, when they acknowledge that they are sincerely contrite ; and, how great or many soever their faults may have been, that we accept their penitence, and restore them to as large a share of our friendship as any wise and good person may think safe and right.—Always remembering, in every case of injury, how liable we are to

to err on the severe side; and, how much better it is to lean towards the merciful one.

SUCH is the temper of forgiveness which we are to bear towards our fellow creatures.—Let us now consider how far it may be a mean, whereby our heavenly Father may be inclined to pardon our offences.—Our Saviour lays great stress upon it, as tending to this effect; both, by inserting it as a condition in the body of the prayer, and, insisting upon it, as necessary, in the words following, “if ye forgive not men
“their trespasses, neither will your Father
“forgive your trespasses.” We must, nevertheless, be careful to observe, that he doth not mention it as the absolute cause of procuring remission of sins: for, “God saveth us not by” this, or any other “works of righteousness, which
“we do, but according to his mercy,
“which he hath shed on us abundantly,
P 4 “through

“ through Jesus Christ ; that, being justified by his grace, we may be heirs of eternal life.”—Our forgiveness of others is no more than a qualification requisite to our receiving that final pardon from God, which our Saviour, through the divine goodness, hath merited by his death.—Nor, is this the only qualification necessary.—For, the rest of God’s laws would have been given in vain, were the observance of them needless: and, “ Christ ” would have been “ the minister of sin,” had he taught that the single disposition to, or exercise of, forgiveness, although accompanied in other respects by an evil mind, were sufficient to salvation.—Our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, hath promised heaven to several other virtues: the meaning is not, that we may obtain eternal happiness by the practice of that most concordant to our natural inclination: but, that each of them shall have its proper share in fitting

fitting us for that mercy and reward, to which we shall not attain, except by a proper regard to all God's commands.—Our imperfections in all will, indeed, be pardoned; but, our impenitent continuance in the wilful neglect of any will not be overlooked.

LET us, also, remember, that if any do not forgive as they hope to be forgiven, such persons, in this prayer, call down God's vengeance instead of his mercy. Let us, therefore, apply to him continually for his grace, to enable us earnestly to perform that which we profess in this petition.—Let us carefully examine our hearts and our conduct, that we may not deceive ourselves; upon God we cannot impose false pretences of an observance of his commands for the true performance of our bounden duty.

“ Let us utterly put away from us all
 “ bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and
 “ clamour,

“clamour, and evil-speaking, with all
 “malice: and be kind one to another,
 “tender-hearted, forgiving one another,
 “even as” we hope that “God for
 “Christ’s sake will forgive us.”

SERMON

SERMON XV.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PART IV.

MATT. vi. 13.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL: FOR THINE IS
THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND
THE GLORY, FOR EVER. AMEN.

WE should be very improper petitioners for pardon and forgiveness of past sins and offences, nor should we long derive advantage from such grace and favour, did we not, at the same time, earnestly desire and “steadfastly purpose to” avoid future transgressions.— After the petition, therefore,
“Forgive

“Forgive us our trespasses,” most properly follows, “And lead us not into temptation.”

THE word temptation frequently signifies nothing more than trial; any occasion or difficulty that may call forth our virtues into vigorous action and practice; and, by so doing, both strengthen and make them known; not unto God, indeed, who knows our hearts; but to ourselves, and all mankind.—In this general sense, our whole life upon earth was intended to be, and is, a state of temptation.—St. James directs us to “count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations,” adding a very good reason for it, “blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—The more love we thus shew to God, the more shall we improve

improve our good principles and habits, and the greater will be our reward.

WHEN, therefore, we say, "lead us
 "not into temptation," we do not pray
 that we may escape all trial. But the
 word here stands for dangerous trials,
 provocations, and powerful enticements
 to sin, by which we are more likely to
 be overcome, than to prevail against
 them. There is, indeed, scarce any thing
 in life which may not thus assail us.
 Our tempers, our ages, our stations, and
 employments in the world, each, in their
 different ways, may risk our innocence.
 They that are poor may be subject to
 repine, and arraign the goodness of God,
 or to pursue unlawful methods for ob-
 taining relief. — They that are rich are
 liable to divers temptations and snares,
 follies and lusts. — Adversity and prof-
 perity, business and leisure, company and
 solitude have their respective dangers and
 hazards. — Sometimes these hazards are so
 dreadfully

dreadfully heightened by particular circumstances, at others times trying incidents occur so suddenly and unseasonably, that though they should only rouse and animate our virtue, yet, may they also overcome and destroy it. We, therefore, know very little of our natural frailty, or have not sufficiently observed the power of our passions, and the insinuations of sin, if we do not esteem it the more prudent, as well as the more modest part (if it be God's will) to decline, rather than to venture the conflict: accordingly we must see the necessity of praying that he would "not lead us into temptation."

IN the sense of inviting and alluring to sin, God, strictly speaking, tempts no man. To pray, therefore, that he would not lead us into temptation, as though we should not have fallen into it, had he not induced (which is inconsistent with his nature) would be impious. But, as
nothing

nothing comes to pass without his knowledge and sufferance, and as all things are subject to his superintendence and direction, the scripture speaks as if every thing was done by him, when the meaning, as appears from other passages, is, only to acknowledge that nothing is done without him. Agreeable to the manner of speaking in the eastern countries, things are ascribed to him which he only permits, and afterwards turns to the furtherance of his own good purposes.—Now, God may very justly permit us to be led into the severest temptations, if we do not pray to the contrary, because great part of the danger proceeds from that weakness which we have wilfully or carelessly brought upon ourselves, and prayer is one of the means he has appointed for our relief and preservation, which means if we use with sincerity and a real desire to fulfil his will, “he will not suffer us to be
“tempted above that we are able; but
will

“ will with the temptation also make a
 “ way to escape, that we may be able
 “ to bear it.”

BUT if, through pride in our own strength, or, by a more proper estimate, weakness; or, through careless negligence, we omit to pray for his help, we cannot expect it.—And, if for form’s sake only, with little faith in, or no dependence upon it, any make his petition, these words of St. James are the answer, “ let not that man think that he shall “ receive any thing of the Lord.”—If we presumptuously expose ourselves to those dangers, from which we beg him to preserve us; or, are careless to avoid them: if in the trying situations, in which he may think meet to place us, we do not exert our best endeavours, as well as pray to surmount them, such prayers can never avail.—Fervent devotion, hearty resolutions, prudent care and watchfulness united, and continued, will

will be our safeguard.—With whatever difficulties we may be surrounded, and how little possibility of escape soever we may see, this should be our encouraging supporter, “commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

IN the second part of the petition which we are now considering, “Deliver us from evil,” the word evil may signify, either sin and its consequences, or the great tempter to sin, for the epithet of evil is frequently and emphatically applied to him in the new testament.—Since, in our present state of trial, we have not only, as experience shews, flesh and blood to wrestle against, our own untoward dispositions, and the solicitations and bad examples of a wicked world to resist; but, as the word of God informs us, “principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places,” an army of invisible
 Q enemies,

enemies, and, therefore, the more formidable, constantly employing all the wiles and stratagems that they are permitted to use :—this consideration, as it manifests our danger, so should it enliven our devotion in prayer for deliverance and safety. With the nature of the power of wicked spirits we are unacquainted :—of this, however, we are certain, that they have no power but what God permits, and he will never suffer them to do that which shall finally injure those who sincerely serve and fear him.—Entice us to the paths of vice, and dissuade us from those of virtue, they may ; but, most assuredly, they can neither force us into sin, nor hinder us, against our own inclinations, from repentance.—Provided, as faithful soldiers, we are upon our guard, and earnestly apply to God for succour, neither their temptations nor those of the world can prevail against us :—for then only “is every man tempted” dangerously,
“when

“when he is drawn away of his own
 “lust, and enticed.”—The enemy within, therefore, is the most formidable, against which we are chiefly to “watch
 “and pray that we enter not into temptation,” remembering always that how
 “willing” soever “the* spirit may be,
 “the flesh is weak,” and standeth continually in need of the gracious assistance of God’s holy spirit, which he hath promised to those that ask.

LET us, likewise, remember, as we pray against being led into temptation ourselves, we be careful that, so far from laying snares for others, we endeavour, as much as possible, to warn and guard them against those to which they may be exposed.—And, as begging God’s help that we may stand is grounded on a strong sense of our proneness to fall, we should shew great compassion towards those who through the same proneness have already fallen.—“Brethren, if a

“ man be overtaken in a fault, ye which
 “ are spiritual, restore such an one in the
 “ spirit of meekness; considering thyself,
 “ lest thou also be tempted.”

THUS have we gone through the six petitions of the Lord's prayer, which shew it to be worthy its Author, and our greatest regard, as it so distinctly comprehends, in so small a compass, whatever is necessary for the honour of God and our good, both spiritual and temporal:—it remains to speak briefly of that which concludes the whole,—ascribing to our heavenly Father the praise “ due unto his name,” acknowledging here, what is, indeed, throughout the whole, implied, that his “ is the kingdom,” the rightful authority, and supreme dominion over all.—His “ is the power” by which every thing just and good is brought to pass,—“ his,” therefore, “ the glory” of whatever we, his creatures, do, or enjoy, or hope for.—
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His is the glory of whatever this universe, and the whole scheme of things which it comprehends, hath had, now hath, or ever shall have in it, whether awful or gracious, worthy the admiration of men and angels.—As all dignity, and honour, and might are his, so are they his for ever and ever: and this,—originally,—independently,—and unchangeably.—“From everlasting to everlasting, he is God:—the same yesterday,—to-day,—and for ever.”

THESE words are at once an act of homage to his greatness, and thanksgiving to his goodness: both of which ought ever to have place in our prayers, and this place no where more proper than in conclusion.—For, the infinite perfections of our Maker, which we thus celebrate, are the best reason for every petition we present to him.—Our blessed Lord, therefore, so adduces them: “For thine is the kingdom, and the
 23 “ power

“ power, and the glory.”—Ending with these acknowledgments leaves them fresh and strong upon our minds: especially, as we finish all with that solemn asseveration—“ Amen :”—which word is used in scripture upon important occasions only, to confirm the truth and sincerity of what is promised, wished, or affirmed.—It relates, therefore, to every part of the prayer equally: and, in effect, declares, that we do heartily believe whatever we have said; and heartily desire whatever we have asked.

THIS expression, moreover, reminds us, that our prayers should be composed in such a language, and in those words of that language, with which all, who use or join in them, are well acquainted: “ else,” as St. Paul argues, “ how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?”

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It should, likewise, remind us very strongly of another thing, if possible, yet more important.—We should not say that to God which we cannot say with the utmost truth.—With what appearance of veracity can any person, who lives in the habitual practice of sin, repeat the prayer our Lord hath taught us, and confirm it by the solemn ratification Amen, when every sentence in it, if duly considered, is a contradiction to his life and manners.—
Surely, when we come before our Maker, we are in earnest: let us, therefore, be careful, that we offer up our devotions in an acceptable manner, for “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.”

WITH that sincerity and fervency, which becomes those who address an all perfect and gracious God, let us, therefore, prostrate ourselves before him.

As our Father, seated on high, let us, with due reverence and humility, sanctify his holy name.—When we pray that his kingdom may come, and will be done, in earth as it is in heaven, be it our care that the tenour of our lives accord to the words of our lips. Let our petition for daily bread and forgiveness of sins be accompanied by such sentiments and acts of charity, as should attend all who solicit those important blessings.—And, as we would avoid all temptation, and every evil, let us faithfully guard our hearts against the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil, relying with firm trust upon the aid and deliverance of him, whose is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen,

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

ON THE CONTEST BETWEEN NATURE
AND REASON, OR OPPOSITION OF
FLESH AND SPIRIT: WITH SOME RE-
FLECTIONS ON THE ADVANTAGES
OF THE GOSPEL OVER THE LAW.

Rom. vii. 24 and part of 25.

O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM, WHO SHALL
DELIVER ME FROM THE BODY OF THIS
DEATH!—I THANK GOD THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST OUR LORD.

THE scriptures every where
set forth man as in a corrupt, degene-
rate, and sinful state; quite fallen from
that innocence and perfection in which
God created him.—Since much has been
said concerning this corruption and de-
generacy, it may not be improper, in
some measure, to enquire into the na-
ture of it.

MAN



MAN is a compound being, consisting of soul and body, each of which has separate and distinct properties, as different as their natures.—To the soul belong the noble faculties of reason, judgment, conscience, and free-will.—The body is the seat of various affections, passions, appetites, and propensities, which are, therefore, in scripture called “the lusts of the flesh,” that being their residence.—As far as the soul is, in its own nature, more excellent than the body, so far do the noble faculties thereof excel, in worth and dignity, the properties of the more ignoble part.—And as it is fit and right, in the nature of things, that the more base and vile should be in subordination and subjection to the more excellent and exalted, doubtless the Author of both placed them in such subordination, viz: the inferior faculties and appetites in subjection to, and under the government of reason, judgment, and conscience.—

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The corruption and degeneracy, then, of human nature must consist in the overthrow and destruction of this subordination, which happens whenever the passions, lusts, and appetites get dominion over the superior faculties, and bring reason into slavery.

THERE are, therefore, in man two different principles of action: one in the soul, viz: reason, judgment, and conscience, which are in scripture frequently called "*spirit*;" the other seated in the body, consisting of the various passions, affections, lusts, and appetites thereof, and therefore called "*flesh*:" the works of which the scripture frequently enumerates, and commands us not to follow, but to crucify and subdue them.—The corruption of nature consists in this, that the latter has obtained ascendancy and dominion over the governing principle of the soul or spirit, and brought that which ought
to

to rule into subjection.—This state is constantly represented in scripture as that of slavery, and, consequently, of misery: hence, our Saviour told the Jews that he was come to make them free: not understanding the nature of which, they declared that they “never were in bondage to any man,” and therefore needed not to be made free, being ignorant of his intention to redeem them “into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

BUT, though reason and conscience are thus held captive, and brought under the servitude of flesh and sense, yet, like other slaves, they approve not, but detest and abhor their degraded state.—This the apostle emphatically expresses in the words preceding the text, where he considers the two principles as though they were two persons existing in the same man.—“That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but

“ but what I hate, that do I.—If then
 “ I do that which I would not, I con-
 “ sent to the law that it is good.—
 “ Now, then, it is no more I that do
 “ it, but sin that dwelleth in me.—For
 “ I know, that in me (that is, in my
 “ flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to
 “ will is present with me, but how to
 “ perform that which is good, I find
 “ not.—For the good that I would, I do
 “ not: but the evil which I would not,
 “ that I do.—Now if I do that I would
 “ not, it is no more I that do it, but
 “ sin that dwelleth in me.—I find then
 “ a law, that when I would do good,
 “ evil is present with me.—For I delight
 “ in the law of God, after the inward
 “ man.—But I see another law in my
 “ members, warring against the law of
 “ my mind, and bringing me into cap-
 “ tivity to the law of sin, which is in
 “ my members.—O wretched man that
 “ I am, who shall deliver me from the
 “ body of this death!—I thank God
 through

“through Jesus Christ our Lord.—So
 “then, with the mind, I myself serve
 “the law of God; but with the flesh,
 “the law of sin.” The sin, which the
 sinner commits, is what he does not
 allow with his understanding and reason.
 For, what his reason approves and dic-
 tates, that he doth not: but, what he
 hates, what is contrary to his reason,
 that he doth, wickedly preferring what
 his own conscience rejects as wrong.—
 Now, if a carnal man do those things
 which are not the choice of his own
 reason, but the dictates of his irregular
 passions, his reason gives its voice for
 the law of God, and declares *that* the
 true rule of life, which ought to be ob-
 served.—“Now, then, it is no more I
 “that do it, but sin that dwelleth in
 “me.”—It is not I, in the best sense,
 it is not a man’s reason, separately con-
 sidered, that produces the wicked action;
 but his sinful passions and appetites,
 which have gained possession and govern-
 ment

ment of him.—For, we find by experience that in our fleshly appetites “dwelleth no good thing.”—Those, undirected by the mind, will never prompt us to that which is true and holy.—“For to will is present with me, but “to perform that which is good I find “not.”—Though God hath endued man with faculties to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, and to approve the one and disapprove the other, yet, being under the influence of carnal passions, he is embarrassed, and greatly defective in practising what he knows to be good and right.—For, in fact, those good actions which his reason sanctions, the man in the flesh rejects, and commits wickedness, which conscience discountenances.—“For the good “that I would, I do not: but the evil “which I would not, that I do.”—If he do that which his conscience contradicts, it is not (as I said before) I, the man in the best sense, it is not his reason

reason separately considered that produces the wicked action, but the prevalency of sensual affection settled and ruling in his heart.—So that, certainly true it is a man may be in such a state, that, whilst his reason approves obedience to the laws of God, the commission of evil may attend him, through the predominance of his passions.—For, as to that I, which is the inward man, the mind or reason, which may esteem the law of God, there is, evidently, in the carnal appetites of every natural man, another I, another principle of action which frequently fights against, and often conquers the principle of conscience, enslaving it under the dominion of wickedness, which the apostle declares to be a state of death.

It, therefore, concerns every one seriously to enquire whether this state be his or not.—The examination is easily made.—Let the drunkard, the swearer,
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the fornicator, or the person indulging himself in any other crime, ask his own heart whether his reason approves his actions, and let his conscience give him an answer: only remembering to observe (since human reason is liable to be clouded with error, by the influence of various passions and prejudices) that conscience be guided by the unerring word of God.—And that this examination is necessary, it is evident; because, no man, until he is convinced that he is wrong, will attempt to go right: but when, by due investigation, he perceives his error, and that the paths he pursues lead to misery and destruction, he will exclaim, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”—Infinite mercy, which can never sufficiently be adored, has graciously provided an answer to the exclamation of the distressed: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” For though, under the weak and lifeless

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dispen-

dispensations of the law, the sinner remained in a deplorable state; under the Gospel the most encouraging hopes smile upon him, and he has the highest assurance that those are quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who embrace the faith of the Gospel, if they make that a principle of obedience, and do not live in wickedness, according to the instigation of the flesh, but in truth and holiness, according to the dictates of the inward man, or rational faculty.

FOR, the dispensation of grace, which is founded in Christ Jesus, and of which he is the chief corner stone, supplying spiritual strength, and promising eternal life, is perfectly sufficient to deliver those who were under the dominion of sin from its yoke, as well as from the penalty of death.—Since, whereas the law could not rescue sinners from the power of Satan, because all the rules of action
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it laid down were rendered ineffectual through the prevalency of fleshly lusts; I say, whereas the law was defective in this great point, as it only prescribed a line of duty, but afforded not strength to perform it, God, by sending his Son to live among us in the flesh, to sanctify and redeem us from all iniquity, hath mercifully supplied the defect of the law, whereby we are enabled to shake off the yoke of sin: but this still depends upon our own choice and resolution in preferring the practice of righteousness to that of iniquity.—For upon no other condition will the advantages of the Gospel be effectual towards our sanctification and salvation: “for if ye
 “live after the flesh, ye shall die: but
 “if ye through the spirit do mortify the
 “deeds of the body, ye shall live.”——
 The thoughts and affections of those who are under the government of sensual appetites are wholly turned to carnal pursuits, and, during their continuance

in that state, they can, by no means, attain life, because they are in opposition and enmity to God, the only source of life and happiness: for, the flesh is not obedient to the rules of temperance, righteousness, and goodness which he has given us, but in direct contradiction to them.—Nevertheless, though man, by nature be under the dominion of the flesh; and, consequently, “the child of wrath;” yet, it is our great happiness that, under the Gospel-dispensation, we enjoy the most powerful means of being emancipated from that state of slavery, and of being brought under the government of reason, conscience, and the *spirit of life*.

WHAT I would endeavour to imprint upon your thoughts is, briefly, this.

THOUGH we are, by nature, in a state of wretchedness and death, through the dominion of sin, yet, it is a matter of
great

great congratulation, and “ I thank God
 “ through Jesus Christ our Lord,” that
 we are not bound to the flesh, to re-
 main in servitude to the lusts thereof,
 either by the invincible power of sensual
 appetite, or through despair of obtaining
 pardon and eternal life.—For, thus the
 case is.—Though all Christians are in-
 vited to accept the salvation of Christ,
 yet, if they continue to live under the
 government of carnal appetites, they
 shall die “ the second death.—But if ye
 “ through the spirit do mortify the deeds
 “ of the body, ye shall live.”—For as
 God, in Christ, hath vouchsafed the ef-
 fectual assistance of his spirit, if we are
 wise to improve that advantage to the
 slaying of the lusts and deeds of the
 flesh, we shall, most assuredly, obtain
 everlasting life: “ for as many as are led
 “ by the spirit of God, they are the
 “ sons of God.”—The relative situation
 of children implies a portion and in-
 heritance: we may expect an heritage
 suitable

suitable to the goodness and ability of
 such a Father :—yea, a joint-heritage
 with Christ himself who is our brother,
 provided, like him (whose steps we are
 commanded to follow) we pay a dutiful,
 and ready, though, perhaps, not perfect,
 obedience, and submission to our Father's
 will.—“ For the grace of God, that
 “ bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all
 “ men; teaching us, that denying un-
 “ godliness and worldly lusts, we should
 “ live soberly, righteously, and godly in
 “ this present world.”—Which, that we
 may all do, God, of his great mercy,
 grant, through the intercession of Jesus
 Christ, our blessed Lord, and Saviour.
 Amen.



F I N I S.